

A sepia-toned photograph of a man in military uniform standing in front of a stone wall. The man is wearing a leather flight jacket over a collared shirt, dark trousers, and a garrison cap. He has his hands in his pockets and is looking towards the camera. The wall behind him is made of rough-hewn stone, and a small cross-shaped mark is visible on it. To the left, a portion of a white structure with a dark diagonal stripe is visible. The overall tone is historical and somber.

# John Kurt Montmeat

## *Letters 1941-1945*

edited by Jack Wilson Montmeat









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FIRST PRINTING

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Front cover: *Jack standing in remains of a barn in France, 1944*

Back cover: *Jack in New Canaan, 2007*

## NOTE ON THE TEXT

*From the time that Jack entered Army Air Corps Primary Training in 1941, until late 1945, his parents saved every letter he wrote. This volume is a result of those letters being collected in a box, on a shelf, and rediscovered in 2011 by this editor, who transcribed each one. Letters he wrote to Ann during this time are also included, as well as letters by and to other family members; along with some official military letters.*

*Every effort has been made to transcribe the letters exactly as they were written or typed. All misspellings, errors in punctuation or capitalization are kept exactly as written and not corrected. Underlined sections in letters are also kept underlined here, as well as strike-throughs in words.*

*This volume contains 193 letters. The 1941 chapter contains 36; the 1942 chapter 39; the 1943 chapter 43; the 1944 chapter 54; and the 1945 chapter 21. Every letter is handwritten by Jack to his parents, unless otherwise noted in the curly brackets that immediately follow the letter's date. The curly brackets identify the type of letter, which varies from a handwritten letter, a typed letter, postcard, telegram, or v-mail; as well as the place the letter was written from. If the letter is written by someone other than Jack, the author of the letter is listed first in the curly brackets. Also, if the letter is written to someone other than Jack's parents, that is also identified in the curly brackets. For example a letter on September 13, 1942 is written by Harriotte Stakely to Jack's mother.*

*Numbered footnotes are added to the letters occasionally to add specific information or family information. Any additional editorial comments or additions are only in curly brackets within the text.*

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## EARLY LIFE

*John Kurt Montmeat was born on June 24, 1916 in Paterson, New Jersey, to Martha Anna Mehringer (1889-1980) and Frank Emil Montmeat (1887-1975). Known as Jack, he was the second of three boys; his older brother was Frank Edward Montmeat (1914-2005), and his younger brother was Richard Montmeat (1925-2015).*

*Martha Anna Mehringer and Frank Emil Montmeat were married September 21, 1911 in Paterson. Frank's father Jean-Marie Montmeat (1838-1930) was born in St. Pal de Mons, France, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1867 to work in the silk mills in Paterson. He married Anna Elizabeth "Elise" Fankhauser (1844-1920) on February 5, 1870 in New York City. Elise was born in Trub, Switzerland. Martha Mehringer's father Edward Mehringer (1865-1943) and mother Anna Yost (1866-1934) were both born in Glauchau, Germany, and immigrated to the U.S. in 1889.*

*Jack attended Eastside High School in Paterson, graduating in 1934. He received a B.S. in Business Administration from Lehigh University in 1938. His first job after graduation from college was for CBS in New York in sales.*

*With the approaching war in Europe, Jack decided to obtain his pilot's license, in order to enter the army air force as a pilot. He received his flight lessons at Bendix Airport in Teterboro, New Jersey. His first flight lesson was on July 13, 1940. After 56 flights, he received his private pilot's license on September 25, 1940. Jack became a flying cadet in the Army Air Corps Primary Training School the following year.*

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Montmeat/Mehringer family wedding September 21, 1911 in Paterson, New Jersey. Martha Mehringer and Frank E. Montmeat are seated in center.



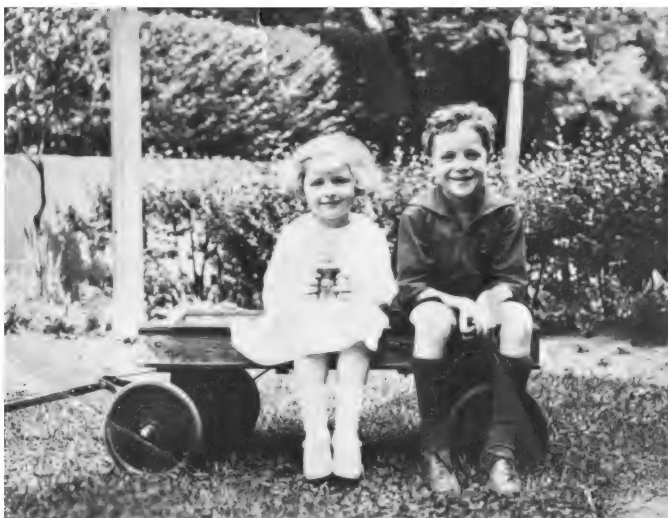
Martha Mehringer Montmeat with son Jack in Paterson, June 1917.



Jack in Paterson in 1918.



Frank E. Montmeat with sons Frank (left) and Jack (right) in May 1919.



Jack with his first cousin Amelia “Middy” Mehringer, early 1920’s.



Frank E. Montmeat with sons (l to r) Richard, Frank and Jack at Ocean Grove, New Jersey in August 1927.





Frank and Martha Montmeat with sons (l to r) Jack, Richard, and Frank, late 1920's.



Jack, early 1930's.



Martha with son Richard.



Jack graduating from Lehigh University spring 1938.



Jack, late 1930's.

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*1941 Letters*



*1941: Having received his private pilot's license the previous year (on September 25, 1940), he entered the Army Air Corps Primary Training school in Americus, Georgia. Jack was appointed a flying cadet on March 11 in the class of 41-H.*

*Jack left Paterson, New Jersey on March 15 in his Ford to drive to Georgia. The first letters begin the next day, in the form of postcards as he traveled down the coast. He reported to the school on March 20. The program consisted of 60 hours training in the air, along with courses in airplane and engine operations, radio code, navigation, meteorology, and military hygiene. Jack made his first solo military flight on April 11.*

*Upon completion of Primary Training on May 29, Jack reported to Cochrane Field in Macon, Georgia on June 3 for Basic Flying Training. The program for Basic consisted of 70 hours training in the air, including his first instrument flying, formation flying, and short "cross-country" flights. The training also introduced night flying, which would later be Jack's principal occupation in the war. Jack made his first night flight during the week of July 14. He completed his Basic Training on August 8.*

*Although not discharged until a week later, Jack was able to make a brief trip back home to Paterson by train, before reporting to Advanced Flying Training at Turner Field in Albany, Georgia on August 19. Advanced training included longer "cross-country" flights, high –altitude flights, combat, and formation. Part of the training included ten days in October spent at Eglin Field in Florida for gunnery practice.*

*Jack graduated from Advanced Training on October 31, and was named a second lieutenant in the Air Corps Reserve. His first day of active service in the Army was November 1.*

*Jack drove home to Paterson as he wasn't to report to his commission until November 12. Jack was to remain at Turner Field in Albany for the rest of the year taking a ten-week instructor's course to become flight instructors. The program consisted of about 70 hours in the air, flying Advanced Trainer planes.*

*Jack was on the 9th tee on the golf course in Albany on December 7 when he received the news that Japan had bombed Pearl Harbor. The next day The United States declared war on*

*Japan. The officers at Turner were no longer allowed to leave Albany or to appear out of uniform.*

*The 1941 chapter contains 36 letters, all written by Jack, to his family in Paterson.*

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**March 16, 1941** {postcard; Commodore Hotel, Washington D.C.}

Sunday 8:30 PM

Staying right here for the night and immediately going to stumble blindly into bed after a tepid shower. Boy am I sleepy!  
Jack

**March 17, 1941** {postcard; Cheraw, S.C.}

Mon. night

I certainly get around—N.J., Pa., Md., D.C., Va., N.C., & now S.C. I thought I'd hit some warm weather by now but its still too cold to put the top down. It was 27° as I came thru Richmond today. I don't know how to pronounce the name of this town but its nice

JKM.

**March 20 , 1941** {Americus, GA}

Wed night

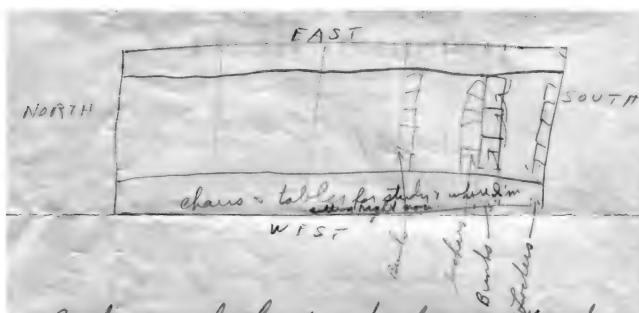
Dear Mom, Dad & R & Frank & Pop,

Gad its great. Brand new field, brand new barracks, a great group of about forty-five boys, swell meals, about 18 brand new planes (Stearmans) that look just like the Waco's<sup>1</sup> at Bendix even the same color blue & yellow.

The field here has been an airport but we're the first bunch of army flying cadets so it has to be enlarged. Tractors & plows are working on it now. Its a large field now & when they finish its suppose to be about 2 miles long.

We live in a beautiful new barracks Here's a map of our sleeping quarters:





Bunks are 2 deckers (with springs). We drew 2 sheets, 2 blankets, & a pillow case & a pillow this morning. This afternoon we each drew 2 caps, 3 coveralls, 1 leather jacket & a sweater. All brand new.

The actual study & flying begins next Monday. Meanwhile we're drilling & hiking. They're going to whip us into good shape in no time. More about our program as I get to know it better. but we're surely not going to have to worry about monotony!

Had a wonderful ride down. As you may have gathered from the cards I stayed at Washington (Commodore Hotel) Sunday nite. It was pretty slow going from Baltimore to Washington as there was heavy traffic. Had a little trouble with my spark plugs as soon as I started out. Got a new one at Bauers—then stopped at Norriston & got them all cleaned.

The bottom dropped out of the thermometer by Monday morning and the tornado hit us. As I passed through Richmond the temperature was 27°. I rode with the blanket around my legs most of the time. I got down as far as Cherow, S.C. Monday night and stayed in the Cherry Laurel Inn- a beautiful old southern mansion I guess. Tuesday I drove the rest of the way and stayed in the queer place above (x)—an old place with tremendous rooms & ceiling about 20 ft. high<sup>2</sup>. It even has fans—the great big old fashioned kind.

This morning I rose leisurely at 8AM CST (9AM EST), had a leisurely breakfast, took my watch to a jeweler to get the crystal replaced (because I broke the old one last night on the steering wheel) and came out here to the airport (about 5 miles out of Americus) at about 10AM just in time to join the cadets in a bit of drill & marching. Then lunch, then having our

clothing,—then drill all afternoon—then dinner (pork chops)  
then arranging my things in the prescribed way in my locker.  
Been loafing ever since & to bed very soon. Listening to Fred  
Allen right now. Boy is this a change from old CBS!

Jack

Hint: My address is  
Flying Cadet me  
Air Corps Training Detachment  
Americus, Georgia

- 1 Open cockpit biplanes which Jack flew at Bendix Airport (now called Teterboro Airport) while obtaining his pilot's license.
- 2 Jack has "(x)" marked at the top of the page above a picture of a hotel.

**March 26, 1941** {Americus, GA}

Wednesday March 26  
8 PM EST

Dear folks,

I don't get much time to write these days cause we've  
swung into action and I do mean action. Here's our schedule  
Mondays thru Fridays:

6:30 AM	First call
6:40 AM	Reveille
7:05	Breakfast
8-10 <sup>30</sup>	Flight Formation
10 <sup>30</sup> -12 <sup>45</sup>	Study
1:00 PM	Dinner
2-2:50	Mathematics class
3-3:50	Meteorology
4-4:50	Engines class
5-5:30	Drill
5:45-6:45	Exercize (hikes, ballgames etc)
7:20	Supper
8:30	Call to Quarters
10:00	Tattoo
10:30	Taps

It's great. We keep zipping from one thing to another and by 10:30 PM we're quite ready for bed.

As for the flying 8-10<sup>30</sup> AM. We are divided into two groups—Sections A & B. A flies from 8-10<sup>30</sup>; B from 10<sup>45</sup>-12<sup>15</sup>. As there are six men to each instructor, there are three for each instructor in each section. That means we ~~are~~ fly about 35-40 minutes apiece each day. I've been up just twice so far as it was cloudy Monday and some of us didn't get up.

The ships are perfect—much better to handle than the Aeroncas<sup>1</sup> and you really feel you've got something. Open cockpits too, so you can feel the wind and really know you're flying.

If you got the Americus paper I sent, you probably know all about the field. Its remarkable how well everything is organized even though things are not yet finished. As I probably told you, we're the first Class here. We'll be here for ten weeks. But in five weeks another group of fifty will enter and each following 5 weeks a new class will enter so there will be a hundred here all the time.

What's this about Frank being called for medical exam? Let me know how he comes out.

Shipping back to our program here. That schedule runs Mondays thru Fridays. I'm not sure yet of what we do on Saturday mornings— I think drill. But from Saturday noon until Sunday nite we have open post. That means we are free to come and go as we please within fifty miles of the field. Last Saturday we went over Americus pretty thoroughly (Americus is about 5 miles from the field). There's not much there although there are some nice homes. You ought to see the negro section—broken down shacks on unpaved muddy roads. In fact all along the highway, you pass these shacks usually with a decided lean and never any paint. In the fields there usually is a negro plowing behind a mule. You seldom see a white man working in the fields. The other night we were taking a walk and went past one of the shacks and there seemed to be the whole family gathered around a fireplace singing. It sounded nice.

Anyway Saturday night we drove over to Albany, Ga. which is a good sized town. It seemed funny to see all the

streets paved, and houses painted and lawns. And Albany swarms with flying cadets as they have about 175 over there.

This Saturday night all us cadets are being invited to a dance given for us by the women in Americus. I think they've rounded up about 30 young ladies to dance with some 46 of us. I'll let you know about these southern belles.

Thanks for the pictures, Richard. They came out pretty well. Send me some more soon. I've yet to take pictures here because its been cloudy and rainy up until yesterday no Monday. But I'm going to soon & I'll send you some.

I've been having some trouble with my tooth—the molar way in back on top on the right. Its been filled quite a bit but it bothered me whenever hot or cold touched it. I saw a dentist last Saturday and he found a small cavity which he filled. That relieved it pretty much but yesterday I woke up and found the tooth all shot. Hot or cold doesn't bother it but if I close my mouth and put any pressure on it it really hurts. I think it'll have to be yanked.

About the Morning Call<sup>2</sup> I really don't think I'll have time to read it. But I wish you'd clip any interesting morsels and send them in some of your more frequent letters. I've told Time to please send my copies here so you won't even see that after a week or so. I really need that because I seldom see a newspaper.

Will you please sometime deposit this check. Its for my transportation down here. You'll find my bankbook in the green tin box in the top left drawer of my bureau (or is that Richard's bureau now? & Where is Richard sleeping)

Also here is a sample of our menu. The meals are marvelous and we get all of everything that we can eat. We'll have to keep working awfully hard to keep from getting fat.

I'm really having a wonderful time down here but I wish I could drop in for a weekend now & then. And seems to me you're being a little skimpy with letters aren't you.

Bye now.  
Jack

PS. I'm afraid the menu will make this too heavy so I'll send it some other time.

- 1 American light single-engine closed cockpit plane.
- 2 The Morning Call is a daily newspaper based in Allentown, Pennsylvania, founded in 1883.

**April 3, 1941** {Americus, GA.}

Thursday, 10AM.

Dear Folkses,

This time always amazes me. Here it is before 10 AM and we've allready been up four hours—washed, had breakfast, cleaned up lockers and room and made beds and had two classes & studied. I'd just be swinging into action at CBS at this hour.

Also we actually been here just two weeks and a few days but it seems a long time. Probably because we do so much & with so little time between.

Our schedule has been changed around a bit this week. We arise (and I do mean arise) at 6 AM and we go to bed (and I do mean go to bed) at 10 PM. One section flies in the morning while the other section (including me) goes to classes. We switch in the afternoon. Right now its raining so the other section has all come in.

Our uniforms are due today so we'll probably be a pretty snappy outfit before long. I think I told you we had to buy them ourselves—some \$12.50 for two shirts, two trousers, cap, tie, belt. (khaki). Up till now we've been wearing our regular stuff except that we all have army sweaters—or vests as they are called and mechanics caps.

Weather has been beautiful—real warm, spring. You ought to see the peach blossoms. And when it rains you ought to see the mud. Last week on one of our hikes we went plowing along dirt roads practically up to our ankles in the beautiful red stuff. I understand now why Georgia cars are so often covered with the stuff. You ought to see the old Ford!

Saturday night Americus Junior Chamber of Commerce & Welfare League gave a dance for us at the Windsor Hotel. It was an awfully nice affair and an amazingly good bunch of girls. Apparantly only the cream of Americus society was invited. There were supposed to be about thirty girls there to

some forty-seven of us, but about half a dozen of our fellows were laid low by the second typhoid inoculation shots we had on Saturday morning, so the ratio wasn't too bad. Anyway it was lots of fun. You ought to hear those gals talk! Wow!

But there isn't going to be anything like that for me this weekend. Seven days a week but of them old Jack has to draw Saturday for his O.D. duty. O.D. means officer of the day which means sitting at the desk downstairs, sounding class & formation signals, sorting mail & generally being handy. Each one gets a crack at it—working down the line alphabetically. So leave it to me to draw Saturday. And since the tour of duty is from noon Saturday till noon Sunday you can see how much weekend I'll have! Oh well I can always study, can't I?

So far I've been pretty lucky in studies. We've had two quizzes so far & I got an A in engines and a B in meteorology. I don't know why because I'm in pretty much of a fog about them especially meteorology.

So far I've had just 4 hours and 10 minutes of flying time. That's been spent on level flight, gentle & medium turns, climbing turns, gliding turns, rectangular courses, S's over roads and stalls. We're due for landings pretty soon and before long we should be soloing. Quite different instruction here because everything is so better organized. Each week's instruction is scheduled and posted and instructor's are supposed to follow it as far as possible allowing for weather and differences in students. And it looks like the army means business. Already there is talk of wash-outs before long although no one has been washed out yet.

Took some pictures last weekend mostly of the boys. I'll have some for you before long. Meanwhile have Richard take some & send them to me.

It sort of tickles me to hear that you too have plenty of mud up in the country. Course that stuff you call mud is really dry sandy soil compared with the stuff we have. But how about the trees? Any word on when they will be shipped? And do Frank and Richard have their gangs organized? Tell Frank to be sure to make Jean<sup>1</sup> go along and work her fingers to the bone!

Had a letter from Frank the other day. Looks like they're sneaking up on him. But I suspect they'll be very glad to get

him for some specialized job which will be much more interesting than regular infantry.

Study hall's just about over now—engines class coming up next. Write soon!

Jack.

Just got a few pictures. I'll have some prettier ones next week. Call me chubby!

JKM

1 A friend of Jack's.

**April 9, 1941** {Americus, GA.}

Wednesday, April 9

Dear Folkses,

Here are a few more pictures you might be interested in. You know pictures are as good as thousands of words so this'll be a long letter.

As these pictures were taken on the same afternoon you can follow a sequence: first Flight A marching out to the flying line. That's me just to the left of the border of the picture. Then one of the planes in the line all set to go. Third is the group gathered around the flight dispatcher (the fellow in the center without helmet or goggles) who tells us in which ship and in what order we fly each day. ~~I'm not in that picture either~~ Yes I am. Then the instructor telling us what we're going to work on (That's me on the left). If you look close you'll see he has a rectangular drawn out on the dirt. (I think I told you that each instructor has six cadets—3 in the morning and 3 in the afternoon. The third fellow in the group snapped these pictures. The instructor (by the way, looks and acts just exactly like our old Chief H A Lotee)

In the ~~fourth~~ no fifth picture the other fellow who was flying first that day & the instructor have whipped off leaving me flat. You can almost see me tapping my foot impatiently. They can't do this to me says I so I retire to the side of the field to join the other fledgelings and watch. In the sixth picture that's

me just behind the fellows arm. He's kindly stepped back in the seventh picture so you can see me squinting into the sun.

Does that all make you pretty jealous. Add to that the wonderful warm sun, peach blossoms, everything all green, good bunch of boys—you can see what a wonderful time I'm having. And boy do the days whip by.

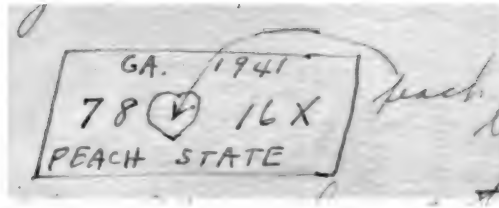
We're flying longer now, in fact I was up for an hour and eighteen minutes this morning. That brings my total to seven hours and twenty-eight minutes. And they're clamping down on us already. The murmurs about wash-outs soon, are becoming loud roars. You never can tell, you may see me home anytime. I think I'm doing all right though, but they don't tell you much.

Spent a quiet weekend last Saturday & Sunday being O-D. You know after being cooped up here all week you just feel you have to get out even tho there isn't any particular place to go. So Saturday noon there I sat at the desk watching the boys streaking out—some to Americus, some to Columbus some to Albany. And there I sat Saturday night while they all rushed out to pick up dates and go dancing. And there I sat Sunday morning while most of them went to church. Finally at noon I went off duty and took a ride Sunday afternoon with another cadet and not two but three young ladies—took a ride out to Andersonville where there is a Union cemetery for some 14,000 Union soldiers. A very nice place. Took some pictures although I'm not sure I had the film in right so they may not come out.

We have our new uniforms now—khaki shirts & trousers & overseas caps. There's an emblem on the sleeve saying "flying cadet". We look pretty natty when we get out on the parade ground to drill. We had to buy them ourselves—not required but we took a vote on it and decided to. We've got to wear some clothes and there are regular work clothes we can always use.

Also I've got my new plates. Beautiful





yellow letters on blue plate. And that's not all—I've also got liability insurance which the army requires. The army requires \$5,000 one person, \$10,000 Total per accident & \$5,000 property. Since the rate was only \$1.50 more I got \$10,000; \$20,000 & 10,000. The annual rate here in Georgia- \$21.44 Doesn't sound like New Jersey does it.

Better get some studying done now. Please write more.  
Happy Easter.

Jack

P.S. A fine thing—trying to cancel order for trees. How about Frank's & Richard's gang? Also—got a letter from Bill Fine yesterday. Also a letter from Mildred saying that the girl who took my work at CBS lasted about 2 days then demanded help. Guess I'm pretty indispensable eh?

J.KM

**April 23, 1941** {Americus, GA}

Wednesday afternoon

Dear folkses,

How did you all get thru Lakewood? Or did you go around it? & who's starting all the fires?

I imagine you had a great time at Atlantic City & I guess it was just as warm as it was here. or even more so. I really wish I too could have rolled in on Friday night in time for some P.S. Did Dady get there? I got a card from him yesterday from Albany.

I really know I'm down south now Imagine going swimming in the middle of April. We went both Saturday & Sunday in a pond just outside of Americus. The water was perfectly comfortable too—it should be after about three weeks

we've had of burning sun. The water was perfectly good clean enough for swimming but I imagine it will get warm & murky during the summer. Haven't played any golf or tennis yet but will probably try some golf this weekend. There's a nine hole course in Americus on which we are very welcome to play. There are also a couple of tennis courts there but they don't look to good.

Did I tell you we were having a dance here at Souther Field<sup>1</sup> last Saturday. It was a return engagement with the Americus Junior Chamber of Commerce & Welfare League to thank them for the dance they gave us a few weeks ago. We held it in the mess hall which we had decorated with lots of dogwood & flowers. Also the orchestra (9 pieces imported from Columbus) sat under a parachute canopy with a bright yellow airplane wing as a backdrop. Refreshments—punch, cookies & ice cream—were served at the other end. Real country club atmosphere! Had a date with a girl from University of Georgia who's doing practising teaching in Americus. Name's "Martie". Very nice too.

Things still move fast here and the days are really whipping by. A new class is due soon—next week I think. Also 20 or 30 new planes are due, and men are working on the field seven days a week trying to finish grading & constructing a concrete runway in time to use for the new class. That runway is just to taxi ships out to the line—not for take-offs like La Guardia Field.

And we're not the same group we were some five weeks ago. I'm not sure how many fellows have gone altogether but five of my original squad of ten have been washed out. The Army's not fooling! I think everyone has soloed now so there'll be fewer washouts at least for a while.

I've got a total of  $19\frac{1}{4}$  hours now—  $14\frac{1}{2}$  dual &  $4\frac{3}{4}$  solo. Left the field solo for the first time yesterday to practise chandelles, coordination exercizes, rectangles & S'es. After you solo you have three periods of supervised solo—that's just landing & take off practise, then three periods of what they call solo stage where you make landings at a particular spot on the field and are graded on them. After you finish that you can leave the field & practise maneuvers your instructor tells you. It felt good to get a slip from the dispatcher, hand it to the

mechanic, climb into the ship, have the mechanic crank it & then take off & fly around alone. Only got up for a half hour today because it was cloudy.

We've finished the mathematics refresher course now & are beginning navigation which is good stuff although we won't have any use for it here in our primary course as we don't do any cross country work.

And speaking of cross country work, I have a new set of tires on the Ford. I don't know how many miles the tires had before I got them but I put on some 12,000 miles and they were really worn down. I was beginning to feel very insecure on them. A week ago Friday I was driving to Americus & heard a sort of flapping noise which proved to be a flat tire. And I do mean flat—the tube was all shot too. So I got four new Goodrich tires & four new tubes for \$31. It's the cheapest tire Goodrich puts out but I think they'll last as long as the Ford which now has 56,000 miles & still running strong.

Now with my new tires and liability insurance I feel pretty comfortable. Haven't gotten a new top yet because the car sits out in a burning sun right next to the flying field so that dust cakes up on it & would wreck a new top in no time. And whenever I drive the tops down anyway so it doesn't look so bad. And boy I certainly am glad I have the car here. Would be lost without it. After being confined to the field for a whole week you feel you've just got to go somewhere.

I don't think I ever thanked you for the Easter cookies. They were really good even tho they had been pretty well broken up. They must really get knocked around because they were well packed. Anyway I set them out on the table and the boys in the bay helped me polish them off in no time. The Army doesn't mind our getting packages but they don't want them kept in the lockers. They think we're getting fed enough anyway.

Bye now & don't forget to write. How's Frank vs. the draft? & how about the little trees?

Jack.

1 Located 3.7 miles northeast of Americus, GA Souther Field was named in honor of Major Henry Souther of Hartford, CT, who was killed in the line of duty in Virginia in 1917.

**May 4, 1941**    *{Americus, GA}*

Sunday, 8 PM

Dear Folkses,

Gad another week shot—how they do go by. And Sunday night is the low point of the week. It really hurts to have to come in at 7:45 on a beautiful night like today.

We've really had a treat today. The Methodist Church today invited us to their service as special guests—and after the service we were taken to dinner in pairs by different families. Another fellow & I went to the Hudsons—who apparently is the banker in town. Nice home, nice daughter (high school age) and three very lively friends from Macon together with Mr & Mrs Hudson. And what a meal. We've had southern fried chicken here at the post and I had been disappointed in it. But today I really had southern fried chicken and now I see what they're talking about. Boy I guess I made a pig of myself. Then there were graham biscuits, and noodles & peas, and corn and ice tea with a sprig of mint & water in nifty silver goblets, all topped off with fresh strawberry ice cream & chocolate cake. Boy and maybe we didn't appreciate eating at a neat table with neat service after some six weeks at the mess hall.

And after dinner they took us out to their farm—which they've had for two years—some 700 acres & Mr Hudson having a great time watching his cattle & sheep & geese & turkeys & chickens. Also, two neat looking riding horses which we couldn't ride today because they needed new shoes. Then there's a big stone & brick house with a driveway & portico (is that the thing you drive the cars up under). And Mrs Hudson with big ideas for swimming pool, and ivy & flowers along a big stone wall across the front. And Mr Hudson just put in some fine trees—he doesn't quibble about 1,000 trees—he put in 15,000 this year. Course he had some CCC<sup>1</sup> men to help. And he hires a family & help to run the farm.

The new class of cadets rolled in last week—some 58 of them a good looking bunch most of them southerners (from Florida & Alabama) and some from New York Boston etc. So now we're a good sized crew—some 90 of us rather than the thirty our class has dwindled to. And tomorrow we go on a new schedule beginning at 5:30 AM. Imagine that! It'll be pitch

black at that hour. Course we'll be tucked into bed at 9:30 so we'll get our 8 hours sleep. You can see it isn't necessary for us to use daylight saving time to get use of all the daylight.

I'll be flying this week from 11:55 AM to 2:30 PM. We're really rolling up the hours now—about 1½-2 hrs a day. My total is now about 33 hrs—over half thru the primary 60 hrs. Worked on chandelles & lazy eights this past week. You can see in Life how they're done. They're great fun—but not particularly easy to do right. We got 9 new planes in this week. They came roaring over the field in formation one afternoon, peeled off one by one and came roaring in.

Oh, before I forget—the questions: 1) Readdressed letters do get here. 2) My tooth is fine—had just one small cavity close to the gum filled & its been fine ever since. 3) Laundry is done by the Americus Steam Laundry. We set the laundry bag out Sunday nights, its picked up Monday morning & returned Friday morning. And I can get my shirts laundered without starch, too! Anymore?

These pictures were taken a couple of weeks ago at the Andersonville cemetery which I think I told you about. The fellow is Johnny Folan (Wesleyan '39—knew Ray Walsh), the girls in black Dorothy Woodard whom Johnny has seen regularly & Virginia Morgan whom I haven't seen since. The fellow pointing at those Georgia peach tags is me. Pls note particularly the book held firmly in the left hand. That indicates study. The picture of the three fellows in the white car was taken a few Saturdays ago (I've lost all track of time) just after a quick swim. That head falling over backward is mine. The arm and head belong to a cute little Univer of Georgia gal (Agnes) in Americus for a couple of months practise teaching. The other picture shows how our class looked lined up (with books) ready for a class formation. We're three times that big now.

Right now I'm going to work on the mimeograph machine. We're putting out a magazine (on a small scale) to be called the Southern Cadet. You'll have a copy of Vol I No 1 as soon as it comes off the press—at least off the mimeograph machine. Then I must quick get my laundry ready. Then I may be able to get a while to study navigation. And then to bed at 9:30. Which doesn't give me much time.

Bye now  
Jack.

1 Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was a public work relief program that operated from 1933 to 1942 in the United States for young, unemployed, unmarried men, as part of the New Deal.

**May 14, 1941** {Americus, GA}

Wednesday 9PM

Dear Folks,

Gad, I really enjoyed those letters & pictures. It certainly seems like a long time since I've seen you all. Time is really flying by—the date May 14 doesn't look far from May 31 when we finish our primary course here at Americus. Then who can tell maybe I'll have chance to dash home. Noone seems to know if we will get any vacation—in fact one fellow has asked the captain and was told that we definitely ~~that we~~ do not. Yet rumors keep flying around. And you can bet I'll be around if I get half a chance.

Looks like it was pretty cold in Atlantic City. Didn't you even swim? Its funny down here—it gets good and warm during the day and then freezes over at night. Like last Saturday at our beer party at Kidds Mill. It was plenty hot in the afternoon & most of us went swimming. Those who didn't go voluntarily were thrown in. Then after supper (sandwiches, potato salad, pretzels, potato chips, peanuts, olives & pickels) we went out to a place where we danced all night to a nickelodeon & ended up eating fried fish & fried chicken—their specialty. On the way home with the top down it got colder & colder & we got blankets & sweaters all wrapped around (because there was a beautiful moon) but finally we had to give up, put the top up and turn the heater on.

Sunday was a perfect day. Cool & clear & I got in my first golf—in fast company too—with two Florida boys who were both good and another fellow who was captain of the golf team at Swarthmore in 1937. Later my instructor came out & played nine holes with us. He's a dud just like me. Anyway everyone was pretty bad so after a few holes we didn't even bother to

keep score- which didn't hurt my feelings at all. It really felt great.

Oh, I forgot to tell you about my Saturday date— Katherine. Can you imagine a southern drawl crossed with a Boston accent? Anyway Katherine's from Americus—went to school at Ryder College in Trenton (of all places) then worked in Boston for a few years. Now she works for the Georgia power company in Atlanta & comes home every couple of weekends. When and if I get the chance she's got to take me and show me all around Atlanta especially Peachtree St. She lives on Peachtree St.

Flying's coming along much much faster these days. My total is now 44 hours. (We get a minimum of 60 hours at primary) We are doing about two hours a day now and maybe you think you don't get tired practicing for that long. Course we don't do it all at once—we fly for an hour then rest for ten or fifteen minutes then fly for another hour. Between us some 90 cadets we really keep those planes going. The new class flies in the morning while we have classes & drill (and I tell you we get up at 5:30 AM these days & go to bed at 9:30 PM) and we upper classmen fly in the afternoon in the rough weather.

We've finished our mathematics, meteorology & engines courses & now we study navigation, theory of flight & structures for three hours each day. That along with study periods, drill, flying, exercises periods & mess keep us moving fairly fast. And by the end of the day like right now we're ready to crawl into bed. Which is what I'm going to do right now.

Goodnight  
Jack.

How about the trees? Thanks Richard for the neat letter!

**May 20, 1941**    *{Americus, GA}*

Tuesday May 20

Dear folks,

Gad May 20—we finish here May 31! Have about 49 hours; 11 more to make my 60 primary hours. Won't be long. We still

don't know where we go from here or whether we will have time in between to get home. If we have five days or more—watch out for me. If less than that there barely be time to drive up like mad, say hello, and turn around and drive back like mad. Which wouldn't be so good so would probably take a little tour around Florida.

The hot weather is just beginning to hit us hard. It started Saturday and has been with us since. Think I told you I had a date from Tennessee this past weekend. Johnny Folan had a girl coming down to stop on her way to somewhere or other & she had a friend. Both girls named Margaret—a little confusing. Had a great time. Both teachers (I have yet to meet someone here who doesn't teach) My Margaret spent some six months ~~in a~~ teaching in a little one room Tennessee mountain school. She said the pictures in Life a few weeks ago showing the one room schoolhouse were really palatial compared to hers.

Anyway Saturday afternoon we beat the heat with a neat swim out at Kidd's Mill—then out here to the post for supper in the mess hall (to show the girls how we lived- they loved it) then back to the Hotel so they could dress—then back to the post for a very good dance which the underclass (we of course are the god almighty upperclass now) gave for us. Really an awfully good dance—nice decorations & good crowd & perfect night.

Sunday morning went to church—then dinner at the Windsor (turkey)—then out to Kidds Mill again to lounge around in the shade under the pines, then another swim—then a hamburger- then a ride out into the country and this time we found a real Tara—big white house big columns, set well back from the road lane of trees leading up to it, hedges in front, lot of small buildings around that could have been slave quarters. We're kind of afraid to go back in daylight tho.—once before we thought we had found Tara but in the cold light of day it didn't look nearly so glamorous as it did in the moonlight. Finally we set them (the girls) off on the way to Atlanta.

Have I told you how our ground school is tapering off? We finished mathematics quite a while ago & also meteorology, finished navigation last week & engines the week before. All



we have left now is theory of flight and structures on which we spend three hours a day. And that'll finish early next week.

Don't know if I ever told you there were four of us from Paterson. Well anyway we all stayed until last Friday— Then one of them was washed out. Today another went by the wayside leaving just two of us. Its really tough on the boys to flunk out now so near the end of the primary phase. But they say fellows are washed out even the very last day.

Either a package has already arrived or will very shortly arrive for Richard. Happy Birthday old man. Thought you might like some of that army stuff. Be sure and have all those pictures developed by the time I get home if I do get home. And no doubt the trees will all be planted by then.

And now for some quick study for quiz in theory of flight & structures tomorrow It's mostly Greek to me!

Jack

**May 30, 1941** {postcard; Jacksonville Beach, FL}

Friday 3PM

Boy we certainly get around don't we? Finished primary yesterday afternoon & came over here last night. The ocean's great

Jack

**June 2, 1941** {postcard; Atlanta, GA}

Monday

Here for the weekend. Wonderful place—saw my first movie (I Wanted Wings<sup>1</sup>) since I've been down here and this morning saw the cyclorama of the Battle of Atlanta<sup>1</sup>—back to Americus tonite then Macon tomorrow.

Jack.

1 Finished in 1886 by German artists, The Cyclorama of The Battle of Atlanta depicts the July 22, 1864 battle of the Atlanta Campaign. The work was until 2004 the world's largest oil painting.

**June 5, 1941**    {Macon, GA}

Thursday June 5

Hello again—

Lots of things have happened since I spoke to you a few Mondays ago—Gad it was good to hear you all—it seems like a long time ago too.

In chronological order—

Finished our sixty hours of primary flying on Thursday afternoon. Spent the last hour with the instructor only this time we rode in the front cockpit instead of the rear as usual.

Immediately after finishing flying Johnny Folan, Jim Finley & I left Americus at 5 PM heading for Jacksonville. Got there about 11:30 or 12 mid & went wild over the bright lights—rode around staring & even found us a neat coffee shop in one of the hotels where we got some real coffee for the first time since we've been down here—then wandered over to the lounge and watched a floor show & listened to the orchestra for a while—the place was filled with naval aviation cadets & soldiers—then we drove out a ways and found the most beautiful tourist place I've ever seen—all beautiful little bungalows & beautifully finished showers—even ice water & newspapers and with a nice green grass court with umbrellas & chairs. Anyway we really slept luxuriously for about \$4 for the three of us. Felt great.

Friday morning we got up—went in to our coffee shop & had a wonderful breakfast—delicious cantaloupe & waffles & coffee—then drove out thru about 8 miles of wandering roads all shaded with droopy looking trees & neat homes—(the center of Jacksonville isn't too nice but this suburb or outer portion is)—out to the Naval Air Base to try & see Tommy Seabrook but he wasn't in & everything was at a standstill because of the holiday.

So we headed back thru Jacksonville and out to Jacksonville Beach. Its not a very impressive place but it looked good to us after 10 weeks of Georgia dust. And its amazing—you drive right on to the beach and drive along it as far as you like. When you feel like it you park and go swimming. And gad the ocean was great—just right warm but not too warm. We splashed around for hours then lay around in the sand (very fine stuff)

then swam some more then dressed—had some clam chowder (good too) & headed back to Americus. Got there about 9:30 PM really tired.

Saturday we had a little business to attend to like getting our equipment all turned in and getting paid off and getting discharged—then lunch—then off to Atlanta. We took one boy to the Airport of Atlanta and watched him enviously as he got into one of those Eastern Airliners which we saw at La Guardia. He was heading home for the weekend (cost him about \$86 plane fare alone). From there we went to Atlanta right smack up Peachtree Street way up thru the business section up to the residential district where we picked up our dates. I think I mentioned our Catherine who lived in Americus—went to school at Rider College in Trenton—worked in Boston for awhile and has been working in the Georgia Power Company in Atlanta (where Bill Lovejoy works—by the way tell Frank I spoke to Bill on the phone and he said to tell Frank to let him know his new address & write him)

Anyway we spent the weekend in Atlanta—had a wonderful time—saw our first movies since I've been here (I Wanted Wings—aren't we glamorous & The Great Dictator)—had a delicious steak dinner—danced—saw Atlanta downtown too good although not bad but it has miles & miles of the most beautiful streets—trees & homes I've ever seen. Reminds me of that Mountain Road toward Verona or Ridgewood except there are a lot more trees. And there are hills around Atlanta too. In fact there's Stone Mountain—the largest single body of granite in the world—a strange gray looking mountain that seems to be there for no reason at all. About 15 years ago they started carving figures of Lee, Davis & somebody else out of the solid rock but they've run out of money so they just quit. An impressive sight anyway. Then we saw the cyclorama of the Battle of Atlanta very interesting too.

Gad it felt great to lounge around and come & go as and when we pleased. But it did set us up for an awful let-down. For Tuesday morning we reported here at Macon. Ever since then things have been pretty much of a blur just clearing up now.

You would have died laughing at our entrance. Four of us drove over in the Ford—the rumble seat filled up with luggage, tennis racquets golf clubs & what not—and the four of us looking and feeling after our weekend like real playboys. ~~Then~~ We drove into the post and were directed to flying cadet headquarters. Then everything went black. Some lieutenant told us to park and pile ~~up~~ out and fall in—which we did. We pulled our shoulders back, chin in, head up, stomach in, hands reaching for the ground until we were just one ache, we saluted everyone in sight, we double timed going from one place to another. We drilled, we drew equipment, we were assigned to rooms, to squads, to squadrons. Phew!

This is a tremendous place. I'd get lost if I wandered out of the cadet area (which there is little chance of my doing). The field is not completed—we use a bit of it so far away they take us out in trucks. But we flew yesterday & today. Gad what ships—the Aeronca in CAA had 50 hp; the primary trainers have 220 hp; these BT (basic trainers) have 450 hp. Boy you know you're in an airplane.

But more about this later. Its almost time for me to be tucked into bed.

Please write soon & often & tell me Frank's address so I can write him. I know how much you appreciate getting mail in camp.

My address is  
Flying Cadet me  
US Flying School No.1  
Macon, Georgia

I suppose you know Jean's coming down. Neat huh?

Bye now  
Jack

**June 23, 1941** {Macon, GA}

Monday June 23

Dear folkses,

Here it is— Monday afternoon raining no flying nothing to do but sleep & read & write and eat fudge cake.

And boy is it good. Its been a long time since I've tasted anything like it. It makes me wonder about date nut bread or something. Would that survive the trip? You really had the fudge cake packed well—it came thru unscathed. And thanks for the Vince & Mennen's & stamps. I certainly can use them.

I suppose you seen and heard from Jean by now. Its been a wonderful week & really enjoyed having Jean down. It must have been a little tough on Jean tho to be alone so much.

And I suppose you have a report on me and what the Air Corps has done to or for me. Please let me know what the report is.

I've just spent most of the afternoon reading old New York Times & all the Alumni Bulletins Chiselers & Purple & Golds you sent down with Jean. By the way if my Harpers comes anymore I wish you'd send a few copies down. We get time to read here. Our classes are run so that we don't have to study. We're learning code which you get simply by practice (fun too) and more engines which we get by lectures & quizzes, and navigation which takes just a little outside work.

But usually we have time to read from after supper until taps. Which is a nice change from Americus where we had about 15 minutes a day to ourselves. So if you have any Harpers, I could really enjoy them. Or any interesting book lying around that I haven't read.

Got a letter from Frank this morning along with the fudge cake & card & note. Apparently he's found a nice soft spot which should be a lot more interesting than the life of a regular army private.

We really see the army around here. As Jean has probably told you Macon swarms with soldiers. Those boys are free every night just like Frank I suppose, while us hard working guys get only weekends. But I suppose things'll even out in a few months when we get our commissions. Wait'll I get a little gold bar on my soldier & go to Fort Dix & make Frank hop all over the lot saluting.

I like those pictures taken at Camp Dix & those clever silhouettes (sp?) Richard did. How do you make them?

You ought to see a truck stuck in the mud right across the road. Thats the nice thing about Georgia. You're either knee deep in dirt or in mud. And most everything around here is

mud—the roads are the only paved parts. I don't think I've told you much about US Flying School No. 1.

There are 97 cadets here—group from primary schools at Americus, Albany, Ga & Arcadia Florida. The whole place has been built in about three months so things are still unfinished. It's a big place—right now the 96 cadets use four of the barracks buildings. There are about eight more cadet barracks unused now but there'll be probably 200 more cadets in a couple of weeks. Then there are an awful lot of barracks & tents for the enlisted men & quarters for bachelor officers. Then plenty of storehouses, post theatre, post exchange (p'x) administration buildings, engineers quarters, construction buildings. Men are working all over the lot. building buildings, paving roads, leveling the field, building runways etc.

We're still using just a corner of the field—we're supposed to start using the runways before long. And the planes are wonderful—Vultee low wings monoplane with 450 hp Pratt & Whitney engines. I'll have to get a picture of one.

Bye now—write soon  
Jack.

1 The U.S. Air Corps ordered seven Vultee single-engine planes in the late 1930's for comparison purposes to twin-engine aircraft.

**July 2, 1941** {Macon, GA}

Wednesday July 2

Dear folkses,

A neat thunderstorm is just starting—the wind comes whipping down the road and you can smell the tar and the dust. I hope it cools things off a bit cause its plenty hot.

We really had a workout this morning. The squadron leader told us that we each had to get in about three hours flying today & tomorrow so that we could keep up to schedule because of the holiday. So we all flew almost steadily from 7:35 AM until 11:45 AM. And maybe you think you don't get tired just sitting flying a plane for over three hours—doing stalls, steep turns, chandelles, elementary eights & landings. We're using the runways now—just like La Guardia Field. And suprisingly enough its trickier than landing on a grass field. Its so smooth

that you've really got to keep on the rudders every second or the ship will get away from you and the roll is much faster. And we're using the radios now. We check out as we leave the line. Thusly "Cochran Control from one zero three. Flying Cadet Montmeat going out for one hour solo. Go Ahead". And the answer. "One zero three from Cochran Control. Roger". (Roger means message received OK.) The clouds this morning were beautiful. A broken layer at about 2000 feet. When you got above them it looked like a tremendous snow bank.

And we hear that we are now aviation cadets instead of flying Cadets. Which means that the insurance premium will no longer be deducted from our pay (about \$6.70 a month); that we will be allowed \$150 toward our uniform when we get our commission; and that when we leave the Army we get a \$500 bonus for each year we have served. All of which doesn't make us a bit mad.

Had a big suprise Monday night. A girl who worked in CBS—in our department—was down home in Atlanta for a weeks vacation and came over to Macon Monday night with another girl from Connecticut whose husband is in Camp Wheeler. Anyway Gladys (York) called me up and I got permission to run into town to see her (from after mess 6:30 until tattoo 8:45.) Gad the whole department has been a mess since I left. Bill Fagan (the assistant sales manager has been out sick for three months (since just after I left), Edith the girl who took over part of my old work went stark raving mad and apparently Ted Danley didn't do too well. Cause now they're getting a man from one of the agencies—B B D & O—to be sales service manager; Ted will probably handle my old job, Edith will be the new mans secretary, and Charlie Whiting—a Harvard chap who was an apprentice—will handle the job I did before Mildred left. All of which is probably entirely confusing to you but makes me feel pretty indispensable. And the new set-up should be good because the new man Ned Midgely is a real guy.

And by the way, Mildred & Bill took their vacation early and made it a somewhat belated honeymoon trip by including Niagara Falls.

We thought we'd be getting a vacation this weekend—in fact Johnny & I had planned to go up to The Smokies to find us

a cool blue lake somewhere. But it is not to be cause we have to be here Saturday morning. That is we have open post from after supper tomorrow (Thursday) until tattoo 8:45 PM Friday night and then again from after lunch Saturday until tattoo Sunday night. Which will keep us from going too far away which I suspect might well be the reason for having us back Saturday. So I'll probably stick around and play golf & swim at the Idle Hour Country Club which is really nicer than it sounds.

It's a neat place about five miles outside of Macon. Nice green fairway, great big trees, even rolling hills to make it interesting. And then after some 18 holes of golf some lunch then a long hot shower (we still have only cold water in our showers in the barracks) then maybe some ping pong, then lounge around the swimming pool for the rest of the afternoon. At least that's what we did last Sunday. And then every Saturday night a dance—orchestra on a screened in porch, and dancing outside on a veranda alongside the 18th hole, colored lights, tables. All kinda neat eh? Tough life this Army!

Course it would be even better to have this soft Fort Dix racket where you can run home every weekend and go up to High Point to swim. How are all the crops? How are all the trees? Hows the swimming? I suppose you'll be there for the long weekend. Have fun—wish I were there too. Maybe about the middle of August between basic & advanced I hope. If not you'll have to come down here I guess?

Bye now  
Jack.

Thanks for the Harpers—they should keep me busy for awhile. If you get to it you might send “Wind Sand & Stars” which was in my room I think.

JKM

**July 8, 1941**    *{Macon, GA}*

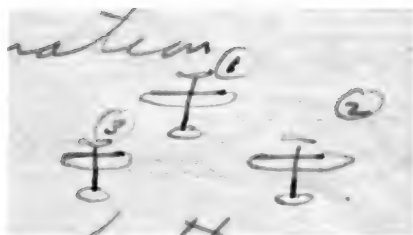
Tuesday July 8

Dear people—

Gad look at that date—our basic training is half thru. And we're really beginning to have fun too. Yesterday I spent some



40 minutes under the hood doing instrument flying. You sit there with eyes glued to the altimeter, air speed, and turn & bank indicator and try to keep that plane flying straight or in gentle turns. Which is quite a stunt. Then today went out for about an hour of formation flying—three planes like this



From the ground it seems they're pretty close but actually the number 2 & 3 planes are above the leader so its not as bad as it looks. And of course we don't fly tight formations. Its funny how the planes seem to hop around up there. When you're flying alone you have nothing to judge by so you think you're flying along perfectly smooth. But when you're trying to stick in position his ship or your ship just won't sit still. He goes up—you go up—he goes down—you go up

Great fun. Then Monday we're scheduled to begin some night flying which should be a real thrill. Hope it's a clear night with lots of stars. Then soon we'll begin cross-country. Don't know yet where we'll go but it'll probably be less than 200 miles so don't expect me yet. All of which should keep us thinking for the next few weeks. And then along about the eighth of August a vacation. I hope. The class that is just finishing its basic training at Gunter Field now is getting a ten day furlough. Which would be a wonderful thing for us.

I suppose you had a sort of rainy weekend at the farm? How are the little trees? I now have the proof that they were planted cause I got Richards neat pictures. Apparently you really put Jean to work. And that looks like quite a steak. Have you had any more trouble with those nocturnal prowlers Richard just got glimpses of in the living room?

We didn't get the three day weekend. We were off from Thursday after supper until 8:45 PM Friday night. Then we

flew Saturday and were off again from Saturday noon until Sunday night.

I spent most of the time playing golf. About 24 holes on Friday—then rained out, and 27 holes on Sunday. I'm really glad that club is there. There's really nothing at all to do in Macon even though it's a beautiful place. But we spend our time at the club—play golf—swim—drink lemonades—play ping pong—sit on the porch—dance (or rather watch the dancing on Saturday nights cause I haven't gotten any dates yet. It seems the theoretical \$75 a month stretches a lot further without dates). And I'm really enjoying this golf. Before you know it I'll be going around in par. I just about double par now.

I suppose Frank was home for the three days? Had a letter from him saying he had seen Don Boyd & Wes Benson at Dix. I can't imagine all these boys along with most of the men from Camp Wheeler. And I imagine that most of them are the same high (?) type.

Us Air Corps guys are the cream you know. We're going places. Actually most of them are a good bunch—and things are very pleasant. Especially tough to see some wash out—so far four men have been washed here at basic.

Please don't forget my brownies, or cookies or something sometime eh? Cause I'm usually hungry. I don't know why because meals are good & there's always plenty. But I'd still like something from home.

Bye now  
Jack.

**July 14, 1941**    *{Macon, GA}*

Monday July 14

Dear Folkses,

Just finishing the next to last piece of that delicious date nut bread and pineapple cream cheese. Its lasted so long cause it was so delicious & I hadn't had any for such a long time that I couldn't bear to have it disappear too quick so I didn't pass it around very far—just my roommate & a couple of other boys but mostly me myself. And there's just one more piece I'm

saving for later tonight. Gad its good, and it makes me even more anxious to get home then I was And that's just about as anxious as anyone can be.

All they've gotta give us is about four days or more and I'll be along. And that should be in less than a month. Wow!

The new class rolled in today some 104 or so which brings our total to just about 200 cadets. I was flying this morning so I didn't see them come in but it was just about like the reception we got. And the boys haven't had a minutes rest since then either—bracing, drilling, saluting, drawing supplies, eating, hair cuts, and what not—with always a half dozen upper classmen (that's us) all ready to hop all over them if they relaxed for a minute or talked without being spoken to, or let their eyes wander from a point. I suspect they feel pretty unhappy about things in general right now. I didn't have much to do with the new fellows but fell into a hot job in the supply department this afternoon—handing out hats, trousers, shirts, shoes, etc—in size too big or too small. Every once in a while tho we'd run into someone who wore one of the sizes we had and we'd just beam all over.

Planes are just beginning to roar down on the line. Its just gotten dark except in the west where the sun hasn't quite gotten out of range so that we can see the neat clouds formation rite outside the window (we get the most wonderful display of clouds each night down here) And tonight we're starting night flying But only twelve men go each night and I ~~didn't~~ was not scheduled tonight. Maybe tomorrow or at least some night this week. There comes a plane now heading right into the west with his navigation lights on. Gad what a thrill that must be. The air is perfectly still for smooth flying at night and it must be wonderful to look down on the lights. And they have lights outlining the runway down on the field too—just like La Guardia Field! Just took a look at that plane from out on our little porch. Looks great except its not quite dark enough yet. But more about that when I see for myself how it is up there.

Spent 50 minutes under the hood this morning flying by instruments. Its really a funny way to fly. You lower your seat way down then pull the hood over the cockpit so that all you can see are the instruments. Then you sit there with your eyes moving from the altimeter to the air speed to the turn &

bank indicator. If the needle moves to the right you know you're turning to the right so you shove the stick to the left. If the little ball moves you've got to correct with the rudder. If the air speed increases & altimeter starts dropping you know you're diving so you pull the stick back a bit. The strange thing is you can't feel what position the plane is in—when you fly contact you rely on your sight and feel. When you're flying instruments you forget the feel entirely because it's wrong when you're blind and you rely entirely on instruments.

Then I spent about 45 minutes flying formation. That's really fun. There you keep your eyes right smack on the leader all the time and do just exactly as he does. And he warns you by signals just what's on his mind.

We were issued maps today so cross-country flying isn't far off. In fact the other training squadron starts tomorrow while we do our night flying this week they do cross country. I think we go to some field about 70 miles north of here for our first ride. And that should be fun. I may even keep right on coming so don't be surprised if I should call from Bendix for you to pick me up.

Spent the weekend playing golf once again—am really beginning to feel I know what the game's about. And really cutting my score down each time—although it's still not fit for publication. Enjoyed a swim at the pool on Saturday after 18 holes of golf and later dropped in at the dance.

Which camp has Dick decided on? That Lutherland might be very good but it must be hard to decide just from some pictures. Why don't you ride over. Or is it too far and too many memories of a long ride a couple of years ago? The thought of High Point or Lake Hopatcong or even Hank's little lake almost drive me mad down here, cause aside from my little private pool I never see water.

Hear Jean was down and you fed her some of my wonderful date nut bread. Also she said Dad went away. Where? And for how long?

I suppose this racket guy Frank was home for the weekend in his commuting from Camp Dix?

Just took another look out—its really dark now and a plane just came in for a landing. Looked neat gliding down until I lost it behind one of the buildings. If I don't fly tomorrow

night, I think I'll take me down and watch unless there's a good movie at the theatre cause they owe me a show from last Thursday. We were just getting into the interesting part ~~when~~ of "Come Live With Me" when the lights went out because of a power failure because of a thunderstorm. Now if Frank had been here he could have trouble-shot it in no time.

By the way did you read that our blackouts were suspended for a couple of weeks? Because of the power shortage in the southeast all city lights showrooms, signs—everything but a couple of street lamps were turned off. But all the rain gave them a temporary supply so they raised the curfew for just a couple of weeks. It looked good to see lights blazing in Macon & I would like to see Atlanta all lit up. But its all off again.

Now I've got a few minutes to read Time—then possibly a quick shower (cold) then bed—no ground school today or tomorrow so no study. Write soon

So long  
Jack

**July 24, 1941**    {*Macon, GA*}

Thursday July 24

Hello again—

Please excuse the paper—really getting down to rock bottom—may even have to buy some if this keeps up.

Just spent the morning sitting down at the operations building at the flight line from 7:45AM to 11:15 AM. But no flying cause the clouds didn't lift. Now that we're back the clouds have gone and theres a beautiful blue sky. And I was scheduled to go cross country this morning too. Over to Montgomery, Alabama, about 150 miles away. Which is a nice trip about an hour and ten minutes each way. Now I hope it'll be clear tomorrow So I can go then. But anyway it may be clear tonight and if so I'll fly tonight which should be neat. But since I spent two nights last week waiting for some clear weather I'm not expecting anything. This summer weather down here doesn't seem nearly as good as home. The tropical gulf air which hits us is warm & moist and so we always have

clouds, fog or thunderstorms. At least its been that way the last couple of weeks.

Then tomorrow night we'll fly in shifts all night long—really keep those planes moving. And next week we may make a short navigation flight at night. Or we may not. They're trying to finish up pretty soon but most of us still have about 18-20 hours to go (we must have 70 hours for basic—it was only 60 at primary).

But even though we finish up soon they tell us the chances are much against getting more than a long weekend between basic & advanced. I hope they're just fooling but you can't never tell. You all coming down to see me in case I don't get home?

Went over to Americus last weekend with Johnny Folan. Had dates Saturday nite—went over to Albany & danced—then stayed in the barracks in Americus—with all the British chappies (they've taken over the whole place now) chatted with one of the instructors awhile—he said these chappies are kinda slow in learning—went to church Sunday then to Katherine's home for a neat southern fried chicken dinner. Good!

I suppose you were all up in the country having a wonderful dinner then going up to swim it off at High Point. Boy maybe I wouldn't like to have some of that! I liked those pictures Richard sent—one of Retreat & one of the trees. Its just a little hard to tell how big those trees are but they look good. And gad I'm all ready for some of that corn—fresh. We've had corn on cob now and then but its usually tough. But there's one thing we do have down here—luscious peaches. You buy a whole box of them for 10 or 15 cents and eat one after another. Sweet & luscious! I wish I could send you some but they'd hardly last. You know we're right smack in the center of the peach growing section. The town of Fort Valley about 20 miles from here is where they are all shipped from—and they ship out some fantastic number of carloads per day. And I saw some cotton growing—but that doesn't get ripe for a couple of months.

Wait a few minutes—there goes mess. Be back in a flash!

I'm back—after eating too much I'm afraid. Course now I'll go to weather class and will probably have to fight off sleep

and I don't want to sleep because the class is really good. We really study weather. Draw maps, color in precipitation areas, fronts, hazards, draw in isobars; decode weather reports; and in general have a lot of fun. That goes on for a couple of hours then a code class. And since today's Thursday I'd better go to code to practice a bit so I can pass my 8 word a minute test tomorrow. We've got to pass it each Friday or else we have to go to class each day. Then an hour of athletics (we have a new gym too for when it rains/ but when its clear we play softball, or volleyball or do calisthenics. Then ~~retre~~ a quick shower— then retreat (and we now have a drum & bugle corps) then supper then fly.

And before you know it another week is all shot and its time for a little golf & swimming. Tough life this Army eh?

How about Richard's camp? Haven't heard where he's going or when. Let me know so I can write him.

Got a letter from Frank this week—he seems to be having a pretty good time— And lucky to be able to come home. And I envy him all his time off— Our Saturday noon until 7PM Sunday is an awfully short time. And this Sunday it appears we'll have to be back at 3:30 to put on a parade for the Macon folks. Which is a little bitter to take.

Also got a card from Dad last week— Hard man to keep track of.

Bye now—have fun this weekend & take a swim for me.

Jack

**July 27, 1941**    *{Macon, GA}*

Sunday July 27

Dear Folkses—

This is, I think, the hottest night we've had. Its suprised me how comfortable is has been. I expected to go mad down here in Georgia in July but actually I haven't felt the heat nearly as much as I have many days home. When the sun's out it really burns but as soon as you get under a roof its not bad at all. And the nights have been comfortable—usually need a sheet to keep warm. But not tonight. I'm just sitting here—finished packing up my laundry which goes out Monday morning (and returns Friday all at a flat rate of \$3.00 a month) and finishing up a

couple of maps for weather class and now I'm just dripping. Pretty soon I'll go down and take me a cold shower (we had hot water just one day now its cold again) and maybe try some "Swan Soap". Must be a new Lever Bros product or haven't I been around.

Thanks for the jelly roll. Tastes neat except the jelly as sort of disappeared—a bit dried up. But its still good— And its good to see the Alumni Bulletin & Purple & Gold & Harpers. From the Alumni Bulletin it looks like all the boys are taking advanced ROTC & getting commissions which sounds like a smart move right now.

Finally got up for some night flying Thursday nite. Gad what a thrill! But didn't have enough time to enjoy the scenery cause they keep you hopping in for landings. They divide the area into zones. Then you got up with instructor and practice about three landings on the floodlighted runway. Then you go up solo and fly around in your zone until they call you in "Zone I from Cochrane Control. Come in for landing. Acknowledge." And you pick up your mike and say "Zone I Roger". Then quick like a rabbit you nose the ship down to 700 ft enter traffic and land—then take right off again and go back to your zone. And just about the time you get back in your zone at 1300 ft its time to come in for another landing.

Its not so tough landing with the floodlights cause they make it just as bright as day. Next we land with the plane's landing lights—just like the planes coming into La Guardia Field. Fun! And its going to be great to fly cross country at night but that won't come until advanced.

Tomorrow I'm scheduled to go on my much postponed flight over to Mt Meigs (near Montgomery Alabama). So lets hope the weather's clear.

What this Jean tells me about you-all loafing up in the country while Dad works nearby. Where? Franklin? Some racket I'd say. And maybe I wouldn't like to drop in! Boy I bet its nice and cool there right now!

Just interrupted myself for a piece of cake. Good! Our larder's pretty well stocked up tonight. A couple of orages from breakfast, the cake & three coke bottles sitting up on the shelf The only trouble is the coke's warm (just got interrupted by a fellow bringing in some peaches!) My roommate hit the



jackpot in the coke machine last night. Put a nickel in—it didn't work so he pounded the machine—so all of a sudden coke bottles started coming out. He just kept pulling them out until he had a armful everybody else got some— Finally they pulled out the plug & when anyone wanted one they just plugged it in. Poor Coca Cola Company. But what good is warm coke?

Mmm the peach is good! Had our weekend shortened a bit—had to be back at 4:30 this afternoon to put on a parade—visitors & all. Passed in review (just like West Pointers ha! ha!) then retreat.

Yesterday (Sat) played just 9 holes of golf—got my brakes tightened (I can throw people right thru the windshield now)—swam a bit—then a neat dinner at the Dempsey—then a quick movie—then out to the club—for a few dances out under the stars—then back here & to bed. Today—went to church first time I've been in Macon. Then back here for dinner—then out for another swim—parade.—supper & now to bed. Write soon.

Jack

**August 6, 1941**    {Macon, GA}

Wednesday August 6

Dear folkses—

Just a quick note before class here—cause I think at least I hope—I'll be home for a couple of quick days next week. Wow!

We finish flying here this week but we'll have to stay here until at least Wednesday of next week. There'll be a graduation dance Wednesday night (out at the club) and then we hope to be discharged Thursday & have to report the following Tuesday to advanced.

Which would give us about five days—just time for a quick dash up and back. But even those couple of days sound wonderful although I don't understand why we can't leave here this Saturday!

But look out for me!

Taking things pretty easy this week—a little flying in the morning—an hour and a half code class in the afternoon—

athletics—retreat—supper etc. Don't know what they'll dream up for us for next week.

I envied you all up in the country cause its been mighty hot down here—the first uncomfortable nights we've had so far.

Right now I've got to get my weekly haircut and then go to class.

Bye now—hope they don't disappoint us again!

Wow!  
Jack

**August 20, 1941** {Albany, GA}

A/C me  
Turner Field  
Albany, Ga.  
Wed. August 20

Hello again,

Gad some style. Here I am sitting at a real live desk—writing. No box balanced on my knee as I sit on the cot. This is the real stuff! Boy if you could only see it. It just stopped raining—a heavy shower—now the sky is blue. Outside the mud is beautiful. One of the boys just came in after almost getting swallowed up. He stepped in a soft spot and went right down up to his knee.

The field is tremendous—not nearly complete.<sup>1</sup> Buildings going up all over the lot—regular army type same as Macon.

Interruption—time out to take a ride to town and out to Radium Springs a neat spring lake cold & clear which looks like it ought be a wonderful spot to spend some hot days. And golf too!

We're having things pretty soft this week. No flying yet. We start next Monday.

This week we've been getting up at 6 AM—breakfast—then a couple of hours drill—then a lecture until noon—mess—then nothing until about 4 PM when we have athletics for 45 minutes (calisthenics) then shower—supper—then open post until 7:45 PM.

But this morning instead of lecture they told us to build ourselves some wall lockers with odd pieces of wood & rusty

nails we could find and a saw & hammer we robbed. So all morning we hammered & sawed—and whipped up some of the damndest contraptions. We certainly expressed our individualities—no two alike.

Then it was kind of hot this afternoon so we didn't drill as scheduled. Then it was pouring at 4 PM so we didn't have athletics but instead had open post.

Tomorrow after breakfast we're to have some physical exams—nothing else scheduled until 4 PM when more calisthenics.

Pretty tough eh?

But its maddening really—cause we could have been spending at least a few of these days at home.

Gad it felt wonderful to be home and see you all. I wish I could have stayed awhile. Things looked pretty bitter Sunday morning when I hopped on that train—and an awful let-down from the style in which I am accustomed to traveling (the Southerner).

We changed trains at Washington and the new one was worse. Two air-conditioned cars but they were thoroughly filled before we got there. So Wil and I and another fellow coming to Albany and a selectee returning to S.C. from furlough sat together in a couple of facing seats Hot and sooty. But we slept and read most of the way until supper—then spent a couple of hours dawdling over dinner in the air-conditioned dining car (duckling) then by that time we had lost quite a few passengers so we could really stretch out and sleep. And before we knew it the sun was coming up and we were in Atlanta.

The generals still haven't decided what to do to me and nine other guys who reported late. I suppose we'll find out in due time!

We have about 80 or 90 cadets here—60 of us flying and about 25 who were washed out of flying and are studying navigation. Two of them are boys who started in Americus with us. All seem like a pretty good bunch.

I've finally seen the fancy trays the enlisted men use. Cause our mess hall isn't finished yet we've been eating in their mess hall. They have a regular cafeteria system with those neat trays with about 6 compartments. They just go down the line and

food is slapped in each one. We get served at tables though—so I guess I'll have to slip into that line to use one of the trays.

Still haven't gotten near the planes but they look wonderful. Regular AT's (advanced trainers) and also twin-engine jobs that carry 2 pilots and a crew of three. Boy it'll be a thrill to fly them if we get to them. We hear that we'll be split up into two groups—some flying the single engine only while some get in twin-engines. They both look OK to me.

I suppose by now you've all had a wonderful time at Atlantic City and really gotten Aunt Amelia up and around again and are now ready to head for the country. I'm jealous.

After our whole week (almost) of freedom its tough to get back in routine again. Its better to be in because you have to be, in. It felt so good to be able to come and go when and if you felt like it with no bugles or commands. And it felt so wonderful to eat at home with tablecloths and everything and to raid the bread box. Maybe in ten weeks we'll have another chance.

At least in ten weeks we'll have some time to ourselves—we filled out applications yesterday for commissions as 2nd lieutenants in the air corps reserves. And ten weeks isn't so far away!

Bye now  
Jack.

Richard—I forgot that tripod gadget for the camera. But as long as my shutter isn't working you might as well use it until I get home again. Unless there's a good spot in some package that may be coming this way sometime ???

1 Construction began on Turner Field on March 25, 1941. Originally named Albany Army Airfield, it was renamed Turner Army Airfield on July 21, 1941 in honor of Georgia native Lt. Sullivan Preston Turner, who was killed the year before in a mid-air collision. The base was activated on August 12, but was far from completion.

**September 3, 1941**    *{Albany, GA}*

Wednesday Sept 3

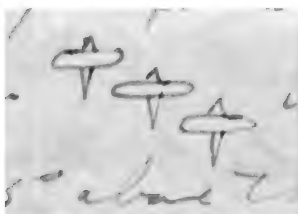
Dear folkses—

Got your neat long over due letter this morning. That Sussex post mark looked mighty good. And it sounded awful good to hear about using blankets at night. We're not. In fact we're having the hottest days we've had all summer. Just as everyone warned us— September seems to be the hot month down here.

But gad how the time is flying. As you may guess from our schedule—up a 5 AM, reveille, straighten up rooms, breakfast at 5:30, flying 6:30-12:30; dinner 12:30—classes from 1:30-4:30 (squadron duties, combat orders, navigation—they change from day to day & week to week) Athletics 4:50-5:20, then at 5:30 retreat 5:35 supper—then we're free until taps. That is we have nothing else scheduled but we can't leave the post. Which is not a great handicap—we're ready to loaf for awhile.

Tonight at 8 we're having a little meeting to decide on the company from which to buy uniforms. By buying all together we save about 10%. Representatives from quite a few companies have been around & we had a committee comparing them. The outfit runs into money—blouse (really the coat), two pairs slacks, cap, shirts, ties, trench coat, insignia & a couple of other things run up to about \$150-\$160. Which doesn't ~~phase~~ bother us at all cause old Uncle Sam has provided us a clothing allowance of \$150. Which is only fair cause we'll have no use for the uniform outside of the army. Anyway it sounds like we're getting close to graduation & commissions.

Still think these ships are wonderful to fly. Spent last week in transition work getting used to the AT 6A. About 10 hours of that. This week we're doing formation. It was beautiful up there today—tremendous cumulous clouds & plenty of blue sky. The only trouble is you've gotta keep your eyes glued on the leader so you see nothing except the background to his plane. In basic we flew only V formation. Here we also fly echelon



with each ship 45° above the other. You should see the planes as they roar over the field in echelon—then one by one at 5 second intervals peel off—circle the field and land.

Also spend half an hour in the Link trainer Tuesday. Thats to learn instrument & radio range work without actually getting in the soup. You sweat like the devil for half an hour making time turns & holding your air speed & ball & needle in the center & then come out in the same spot you started!

Got myself a wonderful home meal Sunday—at the home of the girl I met at Columbia (I think I told you I met her in that advertising course) Gad it was good too. Spent the rest of the three days (we had Monday) swimming at Radium Springs, dancing & drinking a Tom Collins or two at our new cadet club at the hotel—a movie (Meet John Doe); a little tennis & reading a bit. Might have gone away except we didn't get paid. Had fun anyway. Hope to try some golf next weekend.

Bye now— Write  
Jack.

P.S. For overstaying our little leave, we who were late must forego our ration allowance for the couple of days—a matter of \$3 o \$4. Cheap eh?

**September 7, 1941**    *{Albany, GA}*

Sunday Sept. 7

Hello again—

Its been a tough day. Up at 7 AM and had breakfast. Then read the paper for awhile (The Atlanta Journal & I miss the Times or Tribune) then made up bed & straightened up room—then went out to Radium Springs golf course with another cadet and two lovely girls—one from Albany the other a friend of hers named Georgia Tait who lives in Tait, Georgia. Cute eh.

So we played 9 holes—then the gals had to go home for dinner with a grandmother so Bruce & I grabbed a sandwich then returned for another 9 holes. And was it hot this afternoon! But we had a lot of fun—had the course all to

ourselves and its really a beautiful course—just as neat as Macon.

Then a dip in that wonderful Radium Springs—still cold and clear & blue & green & invigorating.

Then that bitter Sunday night feeling when we gotta get back at 18:00 (6 PM) formation & supper.

And we've got a whole flock of newcomers. Maxwell Field is being turned into a reception center for new cadets and will not be used for an advanced school. So they sent half the men over here. Which means that we'll have about 80 new cadets and 30 new planes. They've been dribbling in all day. I suspect its pretty much of a blow to them to see Turner Field. Although our field is far better than Maxwell, the rest of the Field is still only half finished. Barracks & other buildings are still going up—roads aren't paved yet—there's an awful lot of dust—and in general things aren't too prosperous looking. And I understand Maxwell is pretty well established with its own swimming pools, tennis courts 18-hole golf course, permanent barracks etc.<sup>1</sup>

Its going to be a big help to get the new planes. We're pretty short and we're not getting much flying time. In two weeks I've gotten just 14½ hours; ten hours transition—three ½ hours formation and an hour instrument. This new batch will give us a better ratio of planes to men.

And boy they've got a nice schedule whipped up for us this week. Up at 5 and not a break until supper at 5:30. And maybe you think you're not tired by the end of the week.

I envy you that cool September weather—with blankets at night. Cause its really hot here. The hottest we've had. And I guess I picked up a burn playing tennis & swimming today. So I'm just sitting here with the sweat running down.

I wish you'd do something for me. I need some money. The trip home took up most of the money I had and ~~we~~ I haven't been paid for August yet. And last week with \$6.50 left, the car needed some repairs: generator cut-out replaced, fan belt replaced, battery charged & new battery frame—which cost me \$6.45. So will you draw some \$25 from my account and send me a money order. (I think that would be the best way) Then I can pay back the money I've borrowed & have a little to spend.

I think this authorization will do it. Otherwise Dad will know a way to wrangle it.

I hear old Dick is having a soft time at Awosting<sup>2</sup>. How come? And how's that Johnny Weissmuller<sup>3</sup> crawl coming?

Bye  
Jack

1 Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama was named in honor of Second Lieutenant William C. Maxwell, a native of Atmore, Alabama, who was killed trying to land his plane in the Philippines in 1920. The field had its roots in February 1910 when the Wright Brothers opened one of the world's earliest flying schools on the site.

2 Camp Awosting, boy's summer camp in Morris, Connecticut.

3 Johnny Weissmuller (1904-1984), Olympic gold medal swimmer.

**September 15, 1941** {Albany, GA}

September 15th

Hello again—

Tanks for the money order. I'm glad you sent it for the weekend. Cause it wasn't until Saturday noon that we learned we were finally getting paid. Gad it felt good to have some money in the wallet. Just went wild on a spending spree.

First some shoes. This army's expensive to belong to. Altho they issued two pairs of shoes to each cadet they didn't have any for me. You'd think I had big feet. So I wear out my own shoes in drill. Then a foot locker. We have no closets here so I've been living out of my suitcase. Which is a nuisance. So now I have a small trunk which works beautifully. Then some soap & shampoo & toothpaste and shaving cream. And then my camera out of hock (Repaired). Gad it was fun.

Then Saturday night had a date a couple of girls from Macon came over. We met them at the New Albany—had dinner out on the porch—lovely breeze—then headed up to Americus where they were having a dance out at the mess hall. Saw our old instructors & all our old Americus friends. Fun too. Then back up to Macon where we spent the night in a couple of wonderful soft twin beds with a cool breeze swaying the leaves just outside the window. And slept until 11 AM Sunday morning. Boy luxury! Then up & a neat breakfast of tomato juice, a couple of eggs (fried & turned) hot Cakes,



apple sauce, and of course grits and delicious coffee. Then out for a bit of tennis. Then back to sip some lime ice & ginger ale and listen to portions of the New World Symphony & Beethoven's Fifth Symp. & Tales From the Vienna Woods etc on a neat Philco combination. All this was at Leonita's house—who is a friend of my roommate Mike who spends most of his weekends over there. He by the way is a Lehigh man—1939. I knew him just slightly at school. Anyway my date was a sister (Phi Mu) of Leonita & they're all wrapped up in rushing which starts this week at Mercer U. in Macon. Great fun!

Say how about that fox & coon hunt. Did you see it? How does it work? Did you join in? Quite the lade-da set we're in up there isn't it? Sussex is a nice high-sounding name for it too. I suppose by the time I get home again you'll all be wearing red jackets & breeches & we'll be getting up mornings to the blare of trumpets & the baying of the hounds. Zounds!

Had our first cross country trip this afternoon. A triangular course totaling about 200 miles. But this time we made it in a 5 ship flight—taking turns at leading. The part I led was up north directly over the field at Americus. So I didn't have much trouble. Then after about 2 hours 45 min of cross country did anoth 35 minutes of instrument flying. Which gives me 3 hr 20 min today. If we did that every day we'd be finished in no time.

Heard from Bill Fine last week. He apparently is not too happy there. He's just finished thirteen weeks training and expects to be sent somewhere else. He doesn't know where. But doesn't seem to eager. For which I can't blame him much. I think I'd be going mad at a place like that.

Goodnight.  
Jack.

Glamour boy Richard back in school yet? And can't this guy Frank snatch a minute or so to write?

**September 21, 1941**    *{Albany, GA}*

Sunday, Sept. 21

Hello again—

What do those two stamps mean? Think I'm so broke I can't buy a couple of 3-cent stamps? Ridiculous! I'm fairly rolling in money. And just one more weekend and we get paid again. Its monotonous. And I haven't even cashed that money order.

I'm hoping to have to though. Cause that'll just about cover a railroad ticket home. Which we may or may not have opportunity to use. We've now had about 35 hours of flying here. We're suppose to get 70 hours. But some of that is gunnery practise down at Valpariso, Fla. So if we go down there soon we may finish up soon and have some time off in October. It used to be customary to have a ten to fourteen day furlough before getting the commission & then immediately being sent to your post. But everything is changing fast and since we're the first class to go thru under the big expansion we set precedents. So noone nows what we do. But we can dream can't we?

I like Richard's little creation. And maybe your nose isn't way way up in the air in these AT's. They're wonderful. Course we don't have much time alone with them. Ever since our first ten hours transition work when we were solo most of the time we've been with instructor. Either in formation work or instrument or cross country or night flying.

Had a couple of altitude rides last week Climbed to about 20,000 ft. You put on the oxygen mask at 8,000 ft, & from there on up the climb gets slower & slower. Up at about 20,000 ft or so the plane won't climb anymore—the air's too thin. And its plenty cold too. Free air temperature registered -8°C last Friday morning. Richard will tell you how cold that is in Fahrenheit. You don't feel it though cause you just close the canopy & turn on the hot air.

We're pretty much finished with our formation flying now. Working on radio beam instrument flying & Link trainer. Very interesting to learn how to identify you beam and bracket it and fly into the station. All while you're under the hood (with instructor in front seat)

Bet it was neat up in the country today. Took a ride around this afternoon Everything looked pretty neat. Leaves aren't turning yet but its getting cool. And nights we're using blankets (a blanket).

Spent a quiet weekend. Played 18 holes of golf at Radium Springs yesterday afternoon—saw a movie last night—then spent a while at the cadet club. Then did a lot of sleeping today— All ready for 5 AM tomorrow morning. (I'll bet I won't think so when that band starts beating it out in the morning—its pitch dark at 5 AM too: Did you know we have a whole drum & bugle corps to get us out bed in the morning. A good thing too.

Oh by the way did you see Charlie Limberg in Friday's "Life" magazine in the Savannah picture of the 7th regiment? He was my apprentice down there—shared the office with me after Mildred left & he took my old job. Where's Bud Stephenson? Isn't he getting around with the debts?

Now have to straighten out the room a bit and then to bed.

Goodnite.

Jack.

**October 5, 1941**    *{Albany, GA}*

Sunday October 5

Dear folks—

This weather is exasperating. You'd think that here in October it would have the decency to cool off. By all rights it should be snappy—the leaves should be turning & it should feel like football. But here it is swelteringly hot. I don't even have energy to go out and do anything this afternoon. In fact I think I'll go to a movie to cool off.

Its just about 3:30 PM and the World Series is on.<sup>1</sup> Sounds like a good game too. And I'm just sitting here eating that wonderful applesauce cake & fudge cake. And thereby hangs a sad tale. Last Monday morning I got a card saying there was being held for me at the Albany Railway Express Office a package—perishable—charges prepaid. I already had your letter so I knew it would be a cake standing there all week cause I couldn't get into town. But yesterday I finally got it and it is perfectly good. The fudge cake is a little dried out but still perfectly good. While the applesauce cake is perfect—seems even to have mellowed with age. The soap seems in perfectly good shape—although I can't understand where you expect me

to float that Swan soap- and the gum seems OK. The knife was a smart move too.

Apparently from all my mail I'm a popular fellow. C.A.A.<sup>2</sup> is anxious to know about me— College of Paterson is eager to know what I've been doing with myself— Lehigh wants me to know about the situation of the private university during a period of decreasing endowments— Chi Psi wonders about my dues— Alpha Kappa Psi wants my opinion on some important economic discussions— Time magazine thinks I ought to subscribe— Book-of-the-month club believes—as does Omnibook—that I as a lover of good literature I would be vitally interested in how to keep up with the new books.

It must all be because of my affluence. You know about this Army Air Corps. You make plenty of money as an aviation cadet.—\$75 plus uniforms, insurance, lodging, \$150 uniform allowance—etc etc etc. Somehow it doesn't seem to work out just that way. We just got paid last week and somehow I managed to squeeze out with \$45. From which immediately deducted \$2.40 for my bill at the post exchange & \$5 for renewal for Time.

Which means I've really gotta take it easy this month. Cause it looks like we're gonna get home in a couple of weeks. We have another week here to do some more cross-country, night & day, instrument, & some formation work. The following week—the 12th we're scheduled to head down to Valpariso Fla. for some gunnery practise. With good weather we should finish that in about ten days which would leave us from about the 24th to the 30th for a furlough. We're due to get our commissions the 31st and probably our new assignments the following day. So I'm gonna need some money to get home. Maybe—you never can tell when plans will be changed.

We really kept busy last week flying day & night and Saturday & Sunday last week. The idea was to get us pretty well finished so that the new class could use the ships. So we were all pretty tired by the end of the week. So yesterday what did I do but sleep for a few hours—then go out and play three good sets of tennis. Won two of the sets too. Then after getting the cake & leaving my watch to be cleaned and a coke—came back here read all the letters—took a shower—went back to town for supper and spent a few hours at the cadet club (now at

the Hotel Gordon) then came back to bed. And have been sleeping most of today. And I'm now about ready to do sumpin.

Awfully sorry I missed that birthday & anniversary. I've been pretty much in a fog for the last couple of weeks with this 17 hour day of ours.

And tanks much for the cake & soap! Plenty good. And I got notice Saturday that there was a parcel or letter for me but didn't get it as it was closed. I'll get it tomorrow

By now (Boys are rushing me)  
Jack.

1 Game 4 of World Series; New York Yankees beat the Brooklyn Dodgers 7-4.

2 Civil Aeronautics Administration.

**October 7, 1941** {Albany, GA}

Tuesday Oct. 7

Hello again—

Boy you oughtta see this gale we're having— Wind must be up around 35-40 miles an hour—rain & hail whipping by—roads flooded—everything just a couple of feet deep in mud—electricity gone off. Just came back from lunch—took off my shoes poured the water out of them & then quick took everything off & now have my blue striped robe on. The barracks are leaking in quite a few spots but not too badly. Looks like they'll stand up at least. And I'm prepared for a siege anyway. Still have a little of that delicious applesauce cake left & plenty of chewing gum & soap. Pretty well set for a long quiet afternoon.

Enjoyed that cake last night and so did the boys. One of those traveling shows finally got down to us. And it was really good. A clean fast-moving program with excellent talent—dancers singers, drummers, Al Stone, a small orchestra & a good master of ceremonies. Enjoyed it muchly. Then we came back here & ate some cake. Good too.

Got the other package Monday morning. That came right out to the branch post office right here on the field. Thanks for the optipod too. I'm going to try to take some pictures of me in my new 2nd LT. uniform as soon as I get my camera back. Seem to be having a lot of trouble with it. First the shutter went bad & it had to be sent to Atlanta for repairs—now a gadget which is supposed to stop the film after turning it to the next position has gone bad.

Wait'll you see the uniform. They have to be ordered ahead of graduation so ~~they~~ we were measured several weeks ago & the uniforms are gradually coming in—blouse, 2 pairs slacks, shirts, ties, Sam Browne Belt, caps, garrison hat,—all in all some \$150 worth—all covered by the uniform allowance.

We're sort of finishing things up around here. Finished my combat flying yesterday—had a quiz in ground school today which finished up another course. Tomorrow another quiz to finish another course. So all we'll have in ground school is code. And flying just another couple of cross country rides & maybe a little more instrument and another hour in the 'jeep') Then Eglin Field next week—then the following week—Wow!

Bye now  
Jack.

P.S. When I sent that coat & jacket & stuff home from Americus did I send that hat I bought just before I left home—Dobbs Cross Country I think it was—just like Frank's.

**October 13, 1941**    *{Eglin Field, FL}*

Eglin Field, Florida  
Monday, Oct. 13- 7:00 PM

Dear Folkses—

Please excuse pencil & please excuse Write-Right stationary (5 cents for pad & 5¢ for envelopes)—didn't think it quite necessary to bring a pen along on just a week's vacation trip.

We got up bright & early this morning—6 AM quick had breakfast then piled us and our suitcases into our truck convoy

& headed off. And it was plenty cold before the sun worked its way up. Even with our leather flying jackets we still froze.

Enjoyed the trip though. This is the first long ride I've had in the trucks—I think its about 170 miles and these trucks don't go too fast. Stood up most of the way and watched the scenery—mostly cotton fields with real white cotton on em-picked some too. Looks exactly like cotton but the seeds are still in the clumps—saw peanut vines being thrown into machine which sort of thrash them out and come out with salted roasted peanuts in 5¢ bags—and all thru South Georgia & Alabama negro shacks with women & children all barefoot & mules all over the place. And thru the towns our convoy would attract plenty of attention. Everyone waved or just looked. Then for long stretches nothing but the road a railroad parallel & pine trees with cups on the side catching the stuff that comes out—whatever you call. At noon we stopped at a stand and completely cleaned the fellow out of all cold drinks, and cakes & cookies & cigarettes & most everything that wasn't nailed down. I guess he never knew what hit him & he'll have to close up for a couple of days to replenish his stock & count his money. Also we had some sandwiches with us and cookies and oranges.

Finally we hit Florida and at long last beautiful blue water. We're just south of the town of Valpariso Fla and although we haven't seen the water down here yet—its supposed to be just a mile or two away—and as they told us to bring bathing suits—we'll probably be taken down to the officers club for swimming & its supposed to be neat. Also we're supposed to spend some of the time we're not flying: skeet shooting and on the pistol range.

Its perfect out tonight. Clear & cool. And you can smell that clean salt air. So far haven't seen any mosquitoes or gnats like we have at Albany. But there are plenty of flies.

The field seems a lot more established than Turner<sup>1</sup>. But they're still building a lot of new buildings. We saw the field as we came by and there seem to be planes of all kinds—P'40's; B-17's; transport ships—primary trainer, basic trainers—of course all our advanced training ships (which our instructors flew down) & even a few amphibians. But we'll see more of

that tomorrow. We're supposed to have a meeting in a few minutes to find out about our schedules.

(Its been dark quite a while- that 7 PM is central standard time one hour earlier than EST. Its 8 PM EST.)

Sorry to hear Aunt Amelia is in such condition. I don't understand it—if the doctor thinks it's a matter of her controlling her nerves. It must be plenty tough on Uncle Kurt. It must be that Aunt Amelia doesn't have much interest in anything—and Middy's<sup>2</sup> getting off on her own. How is Middy? Is she working & is she still seeing Orrie?

Gad I hope everything runs smooth down here so we can finish quick & get time to come home. In any case it won't be long but even a few days will feel good. The bunch from Selma just left here at about 2 PM (we got here about 4—would like to have seen the boys) and they were here 11 days—but the hurricane held them up a bit. So we're hoping for perfect weather.

If we do get time I'll probably whip up to Atlanta & take the Southerner.

Meanwhile hope you'll write.

A/C me,

Eglin Field, Florida  
should do the trick.

Bye now  
Jack

1 Eglin Field (now called Eglin Air Force Base). From October 1941 - October 1945 a USAAF fixed gunnery school operated at the base.

2 Amelia "Middy" Mehringer (1918-1998) was Jack's first cousin. The daughter of his uncle on his mother's side, Kurt Mehringer (1886-1961) and Amelia E. Bruns Mehringer (1887-1981). She married Orrey C. Hills Jr. (1916-2001) in 1944.

**October 18, 1941**    {*Eglin Field, FL*}

Eglin Field (still)  
Saturday 7 PM

Dear folks—

Had a very pleasant day today Slept until 6:30 than up for breakfast then make cot—read—haircut—then finally at 9:15



over to the flight line. But didn't get up as the schedule went a little cock-eyed. Some of the planes had to be taken back to Turner Field last night because they were due for their 50 hour check. And they hadn't gotten back yet.

So back at noon for mess. Then out to the beach. And boy you should see this beach. Just perfect! I've never seen sand so white—it looks just like snow—or so fine. And I've never seen water so green and so perfectly clear. And the surf is just right—the temperature exactly right—not too warm like the ocean was during the summer but not too cool. It's the kind of water you can stay in for hours and not get cold. And the sun is perfect too. Even a breeze to keep it from getting too hot.

So after spending quite a while splashing around—riding waves in—using a surf board we rented—got out went up to the porch of the place—got myself a big cup of ice cream and sat down basking in the sun while we listened to the Navy-Cornell game. Then a little touch football on the beach—another swim—then back here for shower (warm water!) & supper.

Then cause we fly tomorrow and the movie at the post theatre is a western I'm reading "Berlin Diary" / which Jean sent down to me.

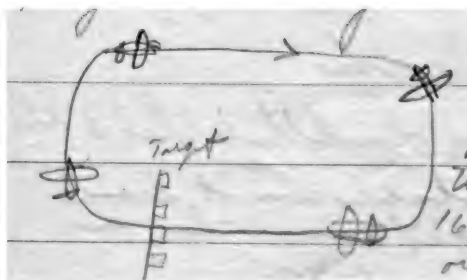
We're having a great time here. I like this field. Its really the first established army field I've been to. Americus, Macon & Albany are schools and we were the center of the whole works. Here we're just incidental. This Eglin Field is an army proving grounds. They have a tremendous reservation in which they can have all sorts of firing ranges and targets. They've got all sorts of ships—P.T's, BT's, AT's, P-36's, P-40's, B-18's, B-26's, B-17E. This B-17E is the newest model of the "Flying Fortress" you hear so much about. And boy what a ship! I think I told you I was in it the other morning while I was being taxied around. And these beautiful Martin B-26's with their tricycle landing gear, and tremendous tails way up in the air. And these P-40's that whip up and out of sight before you know it.

The whole field seems nicely organized. The men seem interested in their jobs and proud of the planes they take care of. Everything seems to run smoothly.

And there's no attempt made to keep us cadets busy every minute just to keep us going. We're beginning to feel almost human again. When we fly in the morning—we get up at 4:20 AM But you don't mind that at all because by the time you get over to the line its light enough to fly. And if you're not flying you have another hour to sleep.

We're having just three activities (other than sleeping and eating)—flying, skeet shooting, and athletics. One day we'll go out to the skeet shooting range for the morning and fly in the afternoon. The next day we'll fly in the morning and go out to the beach in the afternoon. Which makes a pretty nice schedule.

So far I've fired 360 rounds on the ground gunnery range.



Four planes are firing in the same pattern. You fly around at 700 ft—make your turn into approach—dive to about 160 mph then fire. Then pull out steeply turn. And go around You fire 100 rounds in 15 runs. Then you return to the field. Takes about an hour to fire the 100 rds & return.

Still don't know if we'll be getting time to come home. Depends on how soon we finish here and return to Turner. In any case it isn't going to leave many days. And we may or not get time after we get commissions.

So I'll just keep hoping— Boy I'd really like to get up— This is a lot of fun but it would be great to feel a little snap in the air— And to see you all.

If you write soon you'd better address it to Turner.

Bye now  
Jack

P.S. Sunday— Looks very doubtful that I'll get home next week. Probably won't leave here until Saturday & not get more than a couple of days off.

J.KM.

**October 27, 1941**    {*Albany, GA*}

Monday, Oct. 27

9:30 AM.

Dear folkses—

Hope that soon I will finish that Write-right paper and get some even better stuff.

Things have really come to a pretty pass around here. After having a vacation for ten days of swimming & skeet shooting and flying down at Eglin here we are with four days of nothing to do. Open post from last Saturday noon until noon Wednesday. Some of the boys went home but I kind of figured it was an awful rush for the little time at home. And hope we may get some time after Friday.

Left Valpariso Friday. Some of the boys flew up. Some came in the trucks and others like me—rode up with our instructors in their cars. Saturday morning we had just a few things to do in the morning—then we started our lounging again. Never saw the boys whip out so fast. There are just about five of us left here in my barracks.

Saturday afternoon—spent a little time trying on my uniform—the blouse (coat) still has a hump in the shoulder which he can't seem to smooth out. It'll be OK for Friday though and then I can get a tailor to work on it. Then Saturday afternoon played some tennis. Still plenty warm down here—doesn't feel at all like football weather although it gets plenty cool some nights.

Then Saturday night the manager of the Hotel Gordon where we have our cadet club threw a party for us. Cocktails, dinner (buffet supper rather), and orchestra for dancing. And whats more he brought over eight girls from the Georgia State Women's College in Valdosta (where he apparently has another hotel). I had a date with one of them—and imagine my surprise when expecting a neat southern drawl from her (a cute

little blonde) to hear a very very English chatter. Seems she's from London. Came over last winter—spent some time in Montreal—then came down south and somehow or other got in G.S.W.C. Wonderful to talk to and a good dancer. Enjoyed it.

Then Sunday they had the girls out here at the post for dinner. so we escorted them again. They were suprised to see how well we were fed. My little English girl—Dora—thought we had little else than beans! Then we had a little inspection trip—showed them the kitchens (which I had never seen & they have a neat set-up and real equipment). then of course out to the planes to let them see how wonderful we were to fly them—then thru the officers club—and the chapel (you should see our beautiful new chapel with a little red steeple—set in a grove of pine trees. We dedicated it Sunday morning and guess who was there—me!) Then we were suposed to be taken to a show— George Olsen's orchestra was here in person but for some reason—guess the girls were suposed to get back—that was dropped and we said goodbye. Saw the show last night. Very good!

This morning I really enjoyed lying in bed listening to reveille & calisthenics—then finally along about 6:30 I got up and leisurely sauntered over to breakfast—then back straightened up room—made up my laundry—wrote out the graduation announcements and sent out some dry cleaning.

Now I'm going into town take my laundry in & mail announcements get some pants pressed etc.

This afternoon I've a date to go riding with Beryl (the gal from Columbia)—she says they've got a couple of horses over at her place—hope to get in some golf tomorrow.

Guess you know Jean's coming down. Hope I can meet her in Atlanta Thursday morning—but we're all supposed to be here from Wednesday noon. I may be able to get permission though. Then Friday we're supposed to get those wings slapped on us—then a dance Friday night—then ???

Bye now.  
Jack

**November 11, 1941**    *{Aiken, SC}*

Tuesday 9:45 PM

Dear folkses,

Here I am just 17 miles from Georgia. Meant to reach Augusta tonight but then figured it would be nice to see Aiken—since I don't usually get here for the season. Seems like a nice place but will see more in the morning. Its quiet anyway and not quite so dark as the last few towns I've passed thru.

Spent last night in Richmond which was quite a drive. Especially that damn Baltimore which I hit just about the rush hour—and Baltimore's bad enough to get thru at any time. So it took me quite a while to get through. Then I was so sleepy I got lost in Washington.

Those sandwiches were delicious & the cake was perfect. Ate the sandwiches thru south Jersey then topped them off with the cake and coffee on the ferry.

The old Ford's performing admirably except for a flat today (one of the old tires). First flat in several thousand miles.

Should have seen me all tangled up in army convoys today. Miles & miles of trucks for maneuvers. And a spectacular searchlight display around Columbia S.C.

Good night  
Jack

**November 16, 1941**    *{typed; Albany, GA}*

Sunday, November 16

Dear folkses,

Hope you don't mind the typewriter. But I feel like trying it out. Its been a long time since I used one. Anyway I don't have a table yet on which to write, in fact the typewriter is balanced on my knees cause it won't work on the chair cause the carriage catches on the back.

Boy what a life this is. Our "work" is flying half a day. The rest of the time's our own. We come and go as we please. Sleep ten or twelve hours a day, eat when we feel like it, and go out when we feel like it. At least that's the way its been so far.

And we're mighty lucky in the flying. We're taking a ten weeks instructor's course. That's something new. Up till now men have been taken from the graduating classes, given a few hours practise in flying in the rear seat, then immediately assigned as assistant instructors. This course we're getting will be a little more elaborate. We'll get about seventy hours-- half in the AT-6A (the single engine job we've been flying) and half in the AT-7 (the twin engine job). Its going to include transition (practise in the rear seat of the AT-6) formation, altitude, cross country, instrument, night in both ships. We've had all of these things in the AT-6 but there's plenty more for us to learn and the AT-7 is all new. So it should be very interesting and probably the best flying experience we could get. So I'm happy about the whole thing although I would like to up north further.

Although it's awful nice down here in the sunny south right now. Was out playing golf most of the day and wondered how it was up home. Cause we were playing in shirt sleeves and still sweating. And it didn't seem that way at home last Sunday. And everything is still perfectly green down here. Got a monthly membership at Radium Springs Country Club too. Costs \$5.50 a month and since it looks like we'll have plenty of time to play it should be cheaper that way.

Had an easy trip down. Came through Washington, Richmond, Raleigh, Camden, Columbia, Aiken, Augusta, and Americus. The Carolinas were just swarming with soldiers on the maneuvers. Amazing how they take over the whole place. Convoys all along the road. Camps all along. Soldiers all the way thumbing rides or working. Planes zooming around. Around Columbia S.C. there were dozens of 8 million candlepower searchlights whipping all over the sky.

Spent the first night in a tourist place in Richmond. The tourist places look better than the hotels. I guess you got my note from Aiken S.C. the second night. I spent the next morning riding around Aiken. It's a beautiful place- one of these swank in a nice way places. Plenty of big old trees and great big white estates all closed up for the off season, and all white board

fences. And big stables and green pastures. Went out to one of the tracks where four men were apparently trying to get a trotter used to the little carriage. They were having a tough time. He'd keep trying to twist around to get rid of, he wouldn't move, finally he just lay down on the ground. The men weren't particularly excited about it though, they seemed to be enjoying it. I've never been able to understand why people got so excited about horse racing except for the gambling but in Aiken you get a different feeling. The whole town is built around the horses and they must seem to be the most important thing in the world. I want to go up there for some weekend when the racing season starts in a couple of months.

Got here about six Wednesday night and went to bed early. Reported to the flying line Thursday 6:45 AM and spent four hours fling- practicing landings and take-offs from the rear seat half the time and observing for another fellow for the other half. Then after a little meeting at about 1:30 were through for the day. Friday morning a couple hours of the same then a couple hours riding as passenger in the AT-7. They carry pilot, co-pilot and three passengers. Didn't get a chance to fly it. Then Saturday morning spent a few hours instrument flying working on the radio beam.

Had to buy a new tire the other day- one of the old ones blew out on the trip down. Also has the wheels checked for alignment, the brakes tightened and the doors and windows fixed. Feels like a new car. But haven't had any money for furniture. Will get some pay day.

Did I tell you what a wonderful time I had home ? Gee it felt great to see you all and be home for awhile. Sorry though I didn't see Dad. And sorry too I didn't see Frank at Dix. Oh and Richard don't forget to send me some prints of those pictures. If there are any good ones I wish you'd make three prints of them- one for Herb, one for Pat, and one for me. I guess you'll be sure to give some to Jean. I forgot to leave any money for the developer and paper I think you'll find some in the little bank upstairs.

Bye now. Tomorrow I'll fly in the afternoon so if its nice I'll play nine holes of golf in the morning. What a life.

*{written:}* Jack

P.S. Write soon address    LT. me  
Turner Field  
Albany, Ga.

**November 26, 1941**    *{Albany, GA}*

Wednesday

Hello Again—

Just got back from a little birthday party for our friend Miss Bolton. Kind of expected she would announce her engagement to a fellow (Lt.) from Fort Benning who was there—but she didn't. Not for awhile anyway. Several of the boys are getting married and others thinking seriously about it but not sure they can afford it. \$205 plus allowance for quarters & wife sounds like plenty but everything costs so much and there's so much we get soaked for there's very little left. I'd hate to be one of the boys with a brand new car at \$50 a month and a brand new wife even more expensive.

Tomorrow is Georgia's Thanksgiving. We had ours last week same as you all. I really wanted to get home—in fact I even thought I might be able to fly up and suprise you. But we were not allowed to fly up—not till we have more experience—and although we could fly up as passengers with some of the older pilots— I couldn't find any vacancies. Anyway the weather wasn't good on the way up.

So I stayed in Albenny and saw a couple of movies—Fantasia which was a little disappointing although I'm not sure what I expected. I didn't think the picture added anything to the music—in fact on the contrary—played golf—slept—ate—saw the Turner Flyers (basketball) beat Baldwin College—and enjoyed a dance at the Officer's Club here Saturday night. Enjoyed it! And the Army fed us a good Thanksgiving turkey dinner done up in good style. Although it wasn't like home and no Eastside Central game. What was the score?

We're having a lot of fun flying these days. Its pretty cold up in the AT-6 but the AT-7 (the twin engine job) has a nice



heated cabin. And its a beautiful ship to fly. Began flying from the pilot's seat this week. Spent a couple hours flying last night—just local—to practise night landings—then today went on a neat cross country—up to Atlanta (140 miles) then over to Maxwell Field (Montgomery another 140 miles) than back here to Turner (another 140 miles). In all took about 2 hrs 20 minutes—the ship cruises along easily at about 165-170 mph. That's the first time I've flown up to Atlanta and I wanted to make a landing there. I've watched the big airlines land & take off there—but we just circled over it at 4500 ft and continued on our way over to Maxwell. Then got back here and flew a little instrument ride in the AT-6 and really flew that beam in nicely right into the cone of silence—showing at last some results of a stiff workout I gave myself in the Link trainer the other day. Did I tell you too that I took one of the English boys up for a little instrument ride the other day? He wasn't bad at all.

Its getting cold down here in the mornings. Been sleeping with two blankets but every now & then wake up in the middle of the night & find myself freezing so have to put on a heavy comforter we have. And it takes a long time for the colored boy to get heat up here. Although once it gets up its too warm. Never satisfied! I guess it must be plenty cold home by now. Does golf sound sort of out of season?

Bye now  
Jack.

P.S. Dad—will you tell me what bank in Albany to use? I think one of those checking accounts would be convenient so that I don't have to carry much money around. If I ever get any money! (Let me know quick please)

J.KM.

**December 3, 1941**    *{typed; Albany, GA}*

Wednesday the third

Dear folkses,

Its been a very interesting day. Finally got my check and paid off my bills. Deposited my check in the Albany Exchange National Bank cause that's where everybody seems to go and since its been going since 1890 it'll probably go on for a few more years. On a balance of less than a hundred dollars you're allowed five checks without any charge and on a balance of over a hundred up to ten checks a month which should be enough for me. Let me know how the bank is rated.

So as soon as I got my check book I started writing checks like mad. Garage for tire, gas & oil for the month, garage for wheel alignment, brakes, doors & windows fixed, mess hall, officers' club, golf membership etc etc. Great fun to write checks.

Then this afternoon spent four hours flying the AT-7 around by instruments. Were supposed to fly tonight but rain called that off. It doesn't rain often down here but when it does it really comes down in solid sheets. Rained last night and this morning, then cleared up this afternoon, then began again tonight.

Boy that Fort Monmouth stuff sounds great. Jean sent me the clipping- nice write-up. And I suspect they'll really keep Frank busy. That course covers the whole officer training in three months and has gotta be really concentrated. Frank'll really have to keep on his toes. He'll probably have to take a lot of nonsense too you don't mind that when you know its going to be just a few months. Signal corps ought to be plenty interesting too- probably learn lots of new things right up his alley. Let me have his address.

Guess Bill Fine wishes he had taken ROTC or could get in officers training now. Got a letter from him this morning along with yours and he seems completely fed up with the MP job he has and is trying to do something about it. He's hoping Greg Lee can help him get out of it. Bill says there a lot of Lehigh boys there- all officers except him. All the Lehigh engineers are in ordinance. In fact we had one down here for a couple of weeks- he finished Lehigh a year ahead of me and is a first lieutenant in ordinance. He was transferred to a new advanced flying school at Valdosta where he is in charge of ordinance.

The Christmas situation here looks bad. We got a note the other day for our information and guidance to the effect that although the other branches of the service were planning ten to fifteen day furloughs, the air corps because of its pressing schedule and the fact that a new class is scheduled to enter the schools December 20 etc etc it would be impracticable to give any holiday. Which sounds pretty bitter. Maybe you all will have to come down here to our sunny south. You never can tell though. And we got another blow today when they announced that cross-country flights weekends would be cut out. They have encouraged pilots taking trips weekends because they consider it valuable experience. But because they're using planes night and day they're having a little trouble keeping up on maintenance. So temporarily they'll cut out the trips. That doesn't affect us yet because we weren't allowed to take them anyway but its kind of nice to be able to zip up home for a weekend that way- about seven hours each way.

Glad to hear the pictures are developed. Only takes a few weeks eh? Too bad somemany didn't come out. Someday I'd like to get a good picture with that camera. Maybe I'm just awfully dumb. But there's always something. Wasted most of that roll because the stop didn't work so hadda guess about where to stop turning. Pat sent the pictures she had down from Canada. Said she was sending some to Jean.

Just finished the last bit of that wonderful ccake- or is it bread? Anyway it was perfect and especially with the pineapple cheese. The brownies disappeared almost immediately and I had to hoard the cake bread (please cross out one) pretty carefully so that it would last a while. Gad I enjoyed it. Tanks.

May Dowell did an awful thing to me this week. She's up on a trip through New Hampshire, Vermont and Massachusetts so she thought it would be a nice thing to send me some pretty post cards of snow and skiing up at Pittsfield Mt. Greylock. So I came back one evening after playing golf in the hot sun all afternoon and found the cards and May saying that she had made a snowball that day. Which makes me feel very happy.

Anyway the cards are now brightening up my room which by the way will have to be brightened up soon with a new table and lamp now that I'm in the big money.

*{written:}*

Be sure & write.

Jack

Glad you enjoyed the broadcast so much— Should have been good with Mr. Woodey & Phil Baker

**December 14th, 1941**    *{typed; Albany, GA}*

Sunday December 14th

Dear folkses,

Just trying out my typewriter on my new table under my new lamp. Works pretty well too, better than on my knee. Got myself a folding card table at Sears Roebuck, it works perfectly well and is easy to fold up and carry anywhere. Too bad I didn't bring one of the lamps from home. Couldn't get anything but a goose-neck job cause the indirect kind are too expensive. Just as though money meant anything to me when I have millions.

Just finished 18 holes of golf (bad too) and had supper. Weren't interrupted this Sunday like last. Last Sunday we were just finishing the eighth hole when a caddy came along and said that all officers were to report back to the field at once. That was the first we heard of any trouble but we didn't have much trouble guessing that something was going on. It was a shame too cause I was just about to break a hundred. At least I got fifty for the first nine. A fine thing I'd say. They could just as well have held that war till we had finished eighteen holes.<sup>1</sup>

Anyway we hurried back to the field and found they really didn't want us anyway. In fact after listening to news reports for several hours we took time out and went to a movie. Wasn't

any excitement in town at all, just boys selling extras.

Things will continue on pretty much as usual here at Turner. We'll probably stay right here instructing or go over to a new school at Valdosta which is to open pretty soon. We must wear uniform all the time, they told us to get plenty of moth balls for our civilian clothes. Guards have been doubled, they're awful careful about who they let in, and we're not allowed to leave Albany and vicinity. Which I guess we can stand.

Sounds great to hear Frank is interested in his work. Looks like he's being smart. He would have had to stay in the army anyway. Does he still get off weekends? And I still don't know his address.

Oh and speaking of addresses- do you suppose you could quick look through my last year's Christmas cards and send me as many of the addresses as you can without too much trouble. Maybe Richard can in some of his spare time. When the ace is not practising his swimming.

And Dick thanks for the pictures. Looks like a right good job too. That Eastside-Central game must have been monotonous. Let me know how you make out with the swimming team. And what's your time for the hundred?

I've been swimming a couple of times down at the YMCA. Don't know if I ever told you that the Paterson Y sent me a year's membership way back when I was in Americus. Hadn't used it till now but I've been down here several times playing basketball, handball and just generally working. This is an old sort of crumby building but its felt good to work out. Sometime when you see Mr. Gordon at the Y thank him for me. Cause they honor my Paterson membership here.

Had a new job for a day last week. Airdrome Officer. While he's on duty he is an assistant operations officer and signs clearances and is in charge while flying is going on. On duty for twenty-four hours and you stay right at the desk as long as regular flying goes on and stay right by the phone at all other

times. It happened to rain when I was on duty and there was no night flying so I had practically nothing to do.

Friday we had another graduation- 41-I got their commissions. So the place is just swarming with 2nd lieutenants all in bright new bars and uniforms.

Also started our Spanish classes this week. Don't know if I told you about them. We will take two hours a week. Its called conversational Spanish and we don't bother with grammar or the regular stuff you go through in school. Its supposed to, well I'll quote "Through the study of the Spanish language, the Army Air Forces seek to strengthen the ties between peoples who have so much in common"- meaning North and South America. Not a bad idea and interesting too. The instructors good too.

See reports that you have ice and a little snow at last. Its still not Christmasy weather down here. Albany is doing its best though- the streets are all lighted with colored lights and the store windows are full of wreathes and trees and lights. Which is a nice change cause they've been dark so long. The power shortage has just been pretty well wiped out with rain the last few days.

Its going to be awful tough not to be able to come home for the holidays. It was pretty certain we weren't going to have any vacation even before the war started. Now we can't even leave Albany much less go home. You be sure to get a nice big tree and set the electric train up and put some skiers on the hills and skaters on the lake for me. And Richard and Frank had better do some skiing for me too. Bye now.

*{written:}*

Jack

P.S. Date bread is wonderful. I like date bread peachy.

P.P.S Thanks, dad, for the letter.

J.K M.

1 On December 7 the Empire of Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The following day the U.S. declared war on Japan. On December 11 Germany and Italy declared war on the U.S.

**December 27, 1941** {typed; Albany, GA}

Saturday Dec 27

Dear folkses,

That certainly was a fast one Frank pulled wasn't it? He must have been sleepy to go to such lengths just to get a few days rest. And it's a shame to cost old Uncle Sam all the cost of the operation. Just because he isn't paying taxes anymore. And a fine way to spend Christmas too I'd say.

Boy thanks for the wonderful radio. Just exactly the thing I needed most. Makes my little cell really livable and works perfectly in the car too. Gotta confess too- I didn't wait until December 25th to open it. I had strong suspicions when I saw the box, cause you had spoken of portable radios when I was home and I couldn't wait to find if it really was one. And it really is and a beaut too. I can pick up millions of stations with it. Got WCAU Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Cleveland, and stations through the south and southwest and local stations. Right now it sits on the card table along with my goose-neck lamp and some magazines and books. In the Ford it sits right up in back of the seat and plays nice soft music as we ride along.

In some ways its been a wonderful Christmas. It really makes you feel good to know people think about you even though you're a long way from home. The room is lined with Christmas cards- all around the room on the 2 x 4's. Then there are boxes full of candy and cake and things. That wonderful box you sent of date bread and nut cake and dates and Pop's candy (good too) And Jean sent me a big box filled with candy and Christmas stocking, book, ski magazine, toothpaste, and what not and topped off with a beautiful Remington electric shaver in a neat brown leather case. Its even got two heads to

do the job twice as fast. Should save a lot of wear and tear and hacking and blood from my tender face. Course she had to send that ski magazine with beautiful skiing pictures. That makes me perfectly happy.

And Richard thanks much for the tricky little exposure meter. Maybe I can get some good pictures now.

And Mildred sent some fruit cake and raisons and toffees and even a few handkerchiefs.

But I'm afraid I haven't any will power at all- although they all said "Do Not Open Until Christmas" I couldn't resist any of the boxes. I guess I'm just a no-good.

Its now about six hours later. The weather was bad this afternoon but managed to get in about two hours flying. Flying's called off tonight because of the weather and since its not suposed to clear up before ten tomorrow morning we don't have to report at 6:30. Its sort of hard to tell one day from another now. We're on duty twenty-four hours a day seven days a week. Course most of that time all we're doing is just being around. Half of us must be on the post all the time so we take turns. I'm to spend the night right here. Or at least on the post- movies or officers' club.

Christmas Day was just like any other- reported to the flight line at 6:30 AM and stayed there all day on an alert. Christmas night I was invited to one of the married boys apartment for a very good turkey dinner topped off later with egg nogs and listened to some records he had borrowed to try out on his new radio-phono combination Christmas present. Included that set of Victor Herbert and they sounded great.

Before I forget it- would you look to see if you can find any of my C.A.A. pamphlets. Seems to me there might be one on navigation and engines and maybe on C.A.A. regulations. Seems to me I had them all together in a manila envelope somewhere. I'd like to have them if you can find them. No rush. Also I think I'll send a couple of suits home. Have no use



for them here and they take up room. And I wonder if Dad can still get reductions on magazine subscriptions. My Harpers subscription runs out with the January issue and I'd like to renew it. Let me know? Think I'd better keep it coming to 492 E 29 though cause of the trouble in changing addresses. We're supposed to split up this school soon. Some will stay here, some to Valdosta, Ga. And some to Columbus, Miss.

Bye now, thanks again much for the neat Christmas presents and Richard you please do some skiing for me over New Year's.

Jack

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Jack leaving home on March 15, 1941 to drive to Army Air Corps Primary Training school in Americus, Georgia.



Jack leaving home in Paterson on March 15, 1941.



Jack in Americus in April 1941 showing new Georgia license plate.



Jack as a flying cadet in Georgia.



Jack with AT-6 plane in October 1941 at Turner Field, Albany, Georgia.



Jack c.1941.



Jack (second from right) c. 1941.



Jack (left) c. 1941.



Jack c. 1941.



Jack c. 1941.









1942 Letters



*At Turner Field in Albany, Georgia, Jack (as a flight commander) continues to train flight students in AT 6's, AT-7's and AT-9's. March marks one year that Jack is at Turner Field, training both American and British students.*

*On July 3, Jack was promoted to first lieutenant. On July 10, Jack was transferred to Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama with the Central Instructors School.*

*In August, Jack met Ann Augusta Folmar of Troy, Alabama, who was working in operations at Maxwell Field. On September 10, Jack wrote to his parents to tell them he and Ann were engaged, with a wedding to be on October 10. The wedding was held in Montgomery at the home of Judge Gardner, with a reception at the Montgomery Country Club. A short honeymoon followed with Ann and Jack driving to various places in southern Alabama including Point Clear.*

*The 1942 chapter contains 39 letters.*

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**January 7, 1942** {Albany, GA}

Wednesday Jan 7

Dear folkses—

Right this minute am listening to the new Celanese Hour (Great Moments in Music) which seems like a real acquisition to CBS programs—on my neat radio. Tone is amazingly good and clear too. Really appreciate this radio these days when we spend so much time in.

Was out tonight—down at the Y playing some handball with Herb<sup>1</sup>. Also took a quick plunge in the pool and when I say quick, I'm mean sho nuff! Soon as I felt that ice closing in over me I quick butted my head against it and fought my way out. Brrrrrrrrrr!

Thanks for the CAA phamphlets—they're just what I wanted. And good to hear Frank getting up & walking around. And that senior stuff for Richard next month amazes me. Is the lad growing up? And whats Bill Harries doing in the R.C A.F. Whats a matter with the Army or Navy Air Corps? Or isn't he old enough for that?

Understand we're to get American cadets from now on. The next class is due about the end of this week. We're to be assistant instructors for this class—the class will probably be small and we've got plenty of instructors. We've been having very little flying these last couple of weeks. We finished our instructors course a couple of weeks ago—helped out with the British chaps for awhile—flying instrument, formation and cross country with them—I didn't find them nearly as bad as they're cracked up to be. Since then we've been piling up co-pilot time in the AT-7 while some of the older instructors got some pilot time in it. They've been flying in the AT-6A and from now on Turner is to be twin-engine school. As it was right from the start—except we didn't have ships. I'm glad we started on the AT-6's though—they are really a lot of fun.

Christmas has pretty much disappeared from my room now—the Christmas cards are packed away and all the boxes are gone. Just a few raisins & toffees left of all my cake & candy. Now the room is tastefully decorated with about ten maps of the world—Philippines, Panama—Hawaii—Malay—Libya. And on the other side a couple of original (?) paintings from Life by a fellow named Simfowity (sp??) I've forgotten his name—anyway they were in a few weeks ago—New England scenes—and a picture in color from last weeks Life showing just some trees and beautiful snow. Which makes me as you may guess very unhappy.

Goodnight now  
Jack

1 Herbert Waldemar Ritter (1915-2006), who was Jack's best man at his wedding.

**January 13, 1942** {Albany, GA}

Tuesday 9:30 PM

Hello again—

Had fun today—got a new job. The new pilot class is small and there are plenty of instruments so most of us in 41-H have been temporarily assigned to duty with the navigation school.

That means we take the navigation students on their missions—long cross country trips in the AT-7. They have all sorts of navigation problems—point to point, interception, patrol, celestial navigation, air speed calibrations and compass calibrations. Plenty of new stuff to learn. We do all our cross-country work by pilotage—that means with compass and check points on the ground. The navigators practise dead reckoning & celestial navigation. They've gotta figure out air speed (which varies with altitude even though your indicated air speed remains the same); compass variation and deviation, and wind drift and several thousand other things. They check wind drift with double drift observations and chart courses & headings.

The way it works is we usually take a navigation instructor and three students. The instructor sits in the co-pilot seat and the three students each has a board and his charts. Then they take turns directing the flight. We go on the exact headings they tell us. Which is very simple. Except that while we're holding the plane right smack on course at the right altitude and air speed we've gotta keep a map right in front of us at all the time and know exactly where we are. Even though they take us way off course we do as they say until we think we're getting dangerously far away so that we won't have gas to return. Aside from that there's nothing to do except call in every CAA radio range or army airways station and tell them the type of plane—pilot's name—position—altitude mission—destination etc. And every half hour or so you give the control ship a position report. Meanwhile the navigators are giving you corrections and asking for a double drift observation where you turn 45° to the right follow that course a minute and a half—turn 90° left follow that for a minute and a half—then resume heading.

Today we took a run down over the Gulf for a patrol problem. Down past Tallahassee—about fifty miles over the Gulf- looked beautiful & warm too. Then around a certain course—then back. That's just a small trip though. We get some real ones—up to Langley Field, Va., Indianapolis, Miami—Kelly Field Texas, etc. Its going to be bitter to go as

far as Langley then come back without heading the rest of the way up: Fun though.

Had a letter from Frank yesterday—hadn't been outside when he wrote that but I suppose he has by now.

About the De Moley<sup>1</sup> for Richard. I didn't go very often—I got in rather late I think. Depends entirely on the group they have. It should be interesting—certainly something new for the almost-senior. I think it would be a good idea if it doesn't cost too much.

Thanks for the CAA booklets—they're going to be especially handy cause I want to study that navigation so I know what's going on.

We've had some cold weather—went down to about 25° F for a couple of nights. And that's plenty cold down here. But it seems such a waste of perfectly clear cold days with no snow—no hills—no skiis. How's about some ski pictures Richard?

Just heard Raymond Gran singing on my neat little radio. Curious to see if Donald Nelson can clear up the god-awful production mess. Don't know what I'd do without my little portable anymore. Even picked up WCAU Philadelphia the other night Dad home yet?

Goodnight now— Write  
Jack.

1 The DeMoley is a masonic youth fraternity based in Missouri.

**January 26, 1942**    *{Albany, GA}*

Monday morning

Hello again—

Well I've finally gotten some pictures. They'll be on their way today or tomorrow. Couldn't decide which to have made so I got three different ones. Hope you like at least one of them. Jean said she'd like one so she'll have to pick one and let me know.

Boy Jean sent me some wonderful shots of you & Dady skiing up in Sussex. I'd like to have seen that. Especially where you were going so fast you're just a blur on the film. I guess it

needs a pretty fast camera to stop you. And that snow looks perfect. Richard's shot of the Christmas tree is neat and he certainly is a horrible monster. Course I guess we oughta see the Wasp! And he must be a giant. Jean looks like his little sister in the picture. And nice going on the swimming team. What's your best time for the 40-yd freestyle?

Things have been pretty quiet around here. Fog cut off flying yesterday morning and also this morning. But it usually clears up in the afternoon—and it feels just like spring. Perfect weather for golf. Lucky thing we can play that now and then cause otherwise we'd probably go mad. We've gotta be on the post most of the time—and even when we get off its only to Albany or vicinity and nothing much to do there. In fact they've got me down to cutting out paper dolls—or at least little aeroplanes. Got myself four little balsa wood models from the 5 & 10 (5 cents) and having fun cutting 'em out.

The flyings interesting. Have made patrol missions over the Gulf—radius of action—interception problems—a couple of night missions—compass swinging and air-speed calibration. Last week about 23 pilots came over from Barksdale so now we're not sure whether we'll stay in the navigation school or go back to the pilot school. There are pretty persistent rumors that the navigation school is to be moved but we have millions of rumors about everything so we'll wait and see. Also there are about 700 new British cadets here now. they're using Turner as a ~~replacement~~ reception center for them just as they use Maxwell Field for the reception center for the American cadets.

Oh did you see the neat blue cable-stitch (or whatever you call it) sweater Jean made for me? Its really neat— I wish I had more opportunity to wear it. Just a bit fed up with uniforms. Will be handy for golf tho.

I suppose Franks back hard at work now after his little vacation. Is his address the same as it was? And how is Pop<sup>1</sup>—wasn't he up in the country when you were all skiing?

Sun's coming out now—it'll probably be a beautiful afternoon. If we don't fly maybe I can beat some golf balls around. When are you-all coming down—get away from all that cold nasty weather and awful snow and enjoy some of the luscious southern sun? Envious? Boy what I wouldn't give for

a couple of weeks at Lake Placid! Send me more pictures  
Richard.

Bye now  
Jack.

1 Jack's maternal grandfather Edward Mehringer born July 29, 1865 in Glauchau, Germany. He immigrated to the US c.1889 and became US citizen on Nov. 2, 1894. He died in 1943.

**February 5, 1942** {Albany, GA}

Thursday Ay YEM

Hello again—

They've got a nice set up for us this week. We're still temporarily assigned to the navigation school but when the navigation school doesn't need us the pilot school quick calls us over there. So we've spent most of the week riding in the rear seat of the AT-6 on student cross-country trips—day & night. We've gotten pretty soft riding in the warm comfortable AT-7 so we've been freezing in the 6. You oughta see us bundled up in heavy jackets and fur-lined booties!

But we got a nice little surprise this week—we can now wear civilian clothes off the post. First time since December 7. The first night after the order came out I quick put on my blue suit & went to town—and boy it felt good. I didn't even recognize the civilian in the mirror.

Got a letter from Bill Fine yesterday. He's still at Aberdeen—still an M.P.—still hates it and is trying to get a transfer. I can really appreciate how monotonous it gets since I was O.G. (officer of the guard) last week. His (O.G.) main job is to supervise the guard and make inspections. ~~You've~~ He's gotta stay up all night and from time to time drive around in a staff car and see that the guards are on the job. And maybe you don't think that guard duty is a long-lonely job—and cold too—from say midnight to 6:30 AM. I can just imagine Bill doing that day after day & night after night. Enough to drive anyone mad.



Oh—and he says he became twin uncles of a boy and a girl last month—his sister Mabel. Can't you imagine Bill as a twin uncle and Mr Fine as a twin grandfather?

Had a good time the other day. Another fellow and I took some civilian ferry pilots up to Atlanta in a couple of AT-7's. Big as life we went right into the Atlanta airport (Candler Field) between a couple of big transports. The trouble was we couldn't stay more than a few minutes. Would have been great to spend the night in Atlanta. Just you watch out for me—I'll be coming right into La Guardia Field one of these days!

Ran into a small coincidence last Saturday down at the bank. Was talking to an Albany girl whose brother in an anti-aircraft unit is up defending the Wright aeronautical works in Paterson. There must be a definite purpose in the army sending the northern boys down here and the southerners up north.

I suppose you read about what a horrible place (All-benny) your son is stationed. (in Time). I don't understand what brought that on—but it really doesn't seem quite as bad as Time thinks. Albanians didn't like the article one bit—and the Albany Herald denounced it pretty bitterly.

I think it would be a wonderful idea for you to come down Easter or so. But it sounds like an awful long drive and would wear the tires down to the bone. How about the train? Either the Southerner to Atlanta or the Miami express which stops near Waycross (about 125 miles from Albany). Work on the idea anyway—you oughta see the south don't you'all think?

Bye now  
Jack.

**February 11, 1942**    *{typed; Albany, GA}*

Wednesday, February 11

Hello again,

Gad, how time does fly- here it is the middle of February already. Its been rainy the last few days so we've been loafing. Will probably run down the Y this afternoon for a little handball. Then tonight USO<sup>1</sup> is crashing through with a show on the post- this time seems to have quite a program of singers

and soloists on the serious side. Boy we're really getting to be the movie hounds these days - usually see four of five a week. The post theatre is doing a nice job often bringing new pictures before the theatres in town get them, which is very nice cause they cost only twenty cents.

They're starting a new system on the alert. We're supposed to have half of the pilots on the post at all times. They've been assigning alert duty by squadrons - one night on the next off. Now they're going to try letting everybody who wants to go off until fifty per cent are off. Which sounds like a race- first come first served. It may work though. They tell us that actually not more than 35% have been off at any one time. But since there isn't much to do off the post anyway it may work.

Glad you like the pictures. I don't think the photographer is too good but my extreme modesty keeps me from saying that of course the pictures don't do me justice. I got one of the side views just for a change. I've got another one of the picture with the hat on for Pop if he'd like one. I'll send it one of these days when I get something to wrap it in. I can't just go out in the back hall to pick up some paper or reach up on the kitchen cabinet for string.

Jean called up last night. I think she told you she'd like to come down the weekend after next. I put in a request for a two-day pass which may or may not be approved. Boy it would be great to break up this day after day routine with a weekend to do up Atlanta and see the bright lights. Haven't been out of Albany since December - come to think of it - since the middle of November - which is a long time. Especially in Albany.

And Jean says she still hasn't been skiing. Looks like I'm being pretty selfish about this thing. If I can't go skiing no one else is going to have any fun either. How about you Richard - done any skiing? And how many swimming meets have you won so far? Wait'll next summer- I'll come up there and show you a thing or two. I'll drown you!

Looks like the government's going to turn around and snatch my pay check right back this month. Just went over my return lightly and it looks like around 75 - 80 dollars. Mostly because of those nasty CBS people giving me that awful \$346 bonus. Which brings my income to about \$1700. Gad.

Bye now

1 United Service Organizations, an American non-profit organization created in February 1941 to provide entertainment to members of the U.S. armed forces.

**February 19, 1942**    *{typed; Albany, GA}*

Wednesday PM February 19

Hello again,

Well we're instructors again. Tomorrow morning we report back to the pilots school to get ready for a new class of pilot cadets coming in soon. First we'll have to get some time in the AT-9 which is also a twin-engine ship but not nearly so smooth as the AT-7 we've been flying. I spent about three hours in it today- two and a half in the co-pilot seat and just a half hour in the pilot seat before we were called in because of bad weather.

That's the first flying I've done since last Thursday cause its been raining most of the time. Its been pretty dull- finally came to cutting out paper dolls - or at least model airplanes. But I suspect we'll make up for it before long.

Before I forget it- see if Dad can find time to check my income tax which seems to me to come to about \$78. Income: \$40 a week (less social security) for the weeks from January 1 thru March 15. Then \$75 a month for 7½ months from March 11 thru October 31. November & December \$187.50 (we get \$205 but about \$18 of that is ration allowance which doesn't count). That adds up to just about \$1700 which on form 1040A looks like \$78 tax. Yes? Oh and I bet you have lots of little calendars lying around one of which would fit in my wallet nicely. Any old bank will do.

Looks to me like Frank is getting to be the old social lion. Gadding about to dances and reviews and parties. I suppose there will be no holding him when he gets his commission and gets in the gay social whirl of we dashing young army officers. See what I mean. We had a social affair last Saturday night- an Army Relief benefit. We were soaked two bucks apiece for tickets and then were exposed to all sorts of money-losing devices. And the colonel warned us that there would be two strong men at the door who would pick you up and shake you as you attempted to leave. If they found you had any money left they would throw you back until you got rid of it. Which gives you an idea. Kiss booths (3 for \$.25) ??, fortune tellers, “For Men Only”, etc etc and all sorts of wheels of chance. Crooked too. It was a lot of fun. They put on a floor show with a chorus of luscious gals (the “Turnerettes”- girls who work on the field), tap dancer, singers, accordion players, etc. Dancing to the sprightly music of the Turner Field orchestra. Good. About ten of us went to Ed Fishkin’s apartment for a spaghetti supper then all went to the bazarre, then to one of the party’s neat home- looked like one of the neat Glen Rock homes. Enjoyed it muchly.

Right now I’m all set to meet Jean in Atlanta Saturday. Think I’ll go up by train or bus or may be able to get someone to fly me up. It takes about five hours to drive or by train or by bus or about an hour flying. My tires can better be used in about forty trips into town or Radium Springs than a 400 mile drive up to Atlanta. And it looks like they won’t be replaced for a good while. And we’ll really do up the town.

Bye now,  
*{written:}* Jack

**February 19, 1942**    *{postcard; Chattanooga, TN}*

Hello—

Just here for a short visit (couple of hours) Gad don’t I get around tho!

J.KM.

**February 26, 1942**    {Albany, GA}

Wednesday

Dear Dad—

Boy this is really going to be interesting—and is really going to keep us on the ball. This instructing I mean.

We're back in the pilot school and got our students yesterday and started flying today. All American boys—by the way—who are better fliers than the British. I've got three boys—look good too. Flew with two of them today and they handle the plane well.

Maybe you think you don't get tired flying five hours straight—and trying to teach the student how to get the wheels down, and flaps, and fly in the traffic pattern, and making landings and holding it on the runway after he's bounced it or levels off to high and tries to stall it in. Especially from the rear seat—where you can't see anything. Didn't solo my boys today—looked a little too dangerous because the traffic was thick and visibility bad and they weren't too sure of their landings. They should be ready tomorrow though.

Its really fun though and we're really going to learn to fly. And do plenty of it too—each student has to get at least seventy hours in the next nine or ten weeks in the AT-6 & AT-9 (total) and since its practically all dual time, we'll get about 200 hrs. We'll really need a rest by then—hope we can get a few days off to come home.

Had a neat time in Atlanta with Jean over the weekend. Gad it felt great to get away from here for a couple of days and skip flying for a day. After a couple of months of this seven day a week stuff you sorta loose interest in things and everything seems pretty dull.

We ate steak dinner & heard music & danced and saw people (even had a Jewish War Veterans convention at the hotel) and saw bright lights—and I even sneaked out in civilian clothes. Felt wonderful.

Bye now  
Jack

P.S Wish I could see some of your snow up there.

**February 26, 1942**    {Albany, GA}

Wednesday night

Its me again—

Just been going slightly mad figuring out a chart to show my students hours so I'll be able to give them the right assignments. Have a definite schedule to follow—so many hours of transition in AT-6 & AT-9, night, formation, instrument, cross country & link trainer etc. Knowing this schedule and the ships you have for your flight you make your daily assignments.

In case you're not sufficiently impressed- we're not instructors, we're flight commanders. I'm flight commander of flight 9 in squadron A of Group II. I've got three students. Met them yesterday and flew with two of them today. Gave them each two and a half hours but didn't feel they were quite ready to solo. Tomorrow they'll be alright I think. They handle the plane pretty well in the air—need just a little more practise landings.

Gad, thanks for the cookies. Awful good. And those socks are perfect—just exactly the kind I like. I've tried to get some ribs but they don't seem to have them in the right color. And they'll come in handy on these ~~cool~~ cold mornings riding in the back seat of the AT-6—brrrrrh its cold!

Had a wonderful time up in Atlanta over the weekend. Suppose Jean has told you about it. I was awfully afraid I wasn't going to be able to make. My leave had been approved thru the navigation school. Then Thursday morning we were suddenly switched back to the pilot school—where they had a strenous program—instructors refresher course scheduled for us. Flew morning noon & night Thursday & Friday & the same was scheduled for Saturday, Sunday & Monday too. Mostly in the AT-9 which we hadn't flown. (The AT-9 is a Curtiss twin-engine trainer). So I almost called Jean to tell her she had better not come. Then I decided to take a chance and didn't—figuring if worse came she might come over to Albany. But the captain was an awful good guy about it and gave me permission to leave Saturday afternoon and be back Monday morning. Which I proceeded to do with little urging.

And gad did it feel good to get away for awhile. And we ate real dinners and heard music & I felt almost like a human being.

And Jean says you may all be down sometime soon. That sounds marvelous. You should see the South in the spring. Come down here and meet it on its way up home. Hurry down hyah!

I wish you'd send me Franks address—I can't seem to find his latest. How's he doing?

Had a good USO show here tonight. Saw just the last part of it—a Latin American musical revue rhumbas, sambas, congas. Wow! Short but sweet. Talent excellent. They've really got rhythm. Makes our 1-2-3-4 fox trot stuff seem pretty stuffy.

Goodnight,  
Jack

**March 4, 1942**    *{Albany, GA}*

Wednesday

Dear folkses—

Well we're working again—and it feels good. Started last Wednesday with our new cadets—have been flying four to five hours a day since then. I have three cadets but one is in the hospital—with measles or something. One is from New York, the other from Passaic. A small world.

So we've been flying in the AT-6 and the AT-9. This instructing's very interesting. Keeps you on your toes too. When you try to demonstrate something you've gotta make it just as pretty as you can—or you can't expect the student to do it right. And when he's flying it you not only have to see what he's doing but know how far you can let him go before you lend a hand. Which is very interesting!

The AT-6 is not much of a change from the basic trainer they've been flying—except for the retractable landing gear and hydraulic flaps & more power. But the twin engine—AT-9 seems like an awful lot of aeroplane to them. And wheels first power on landings are a little different from the three-point landings they've had so far. But they catch on pretty fast.

They suprised us Sunday—gave us a day off. Half of us flew Saturday—the other half Sunday. So full of pep, Herb and I went out Sunday morning and got us a couple of horses and had a neat ride. Then Sunday afternoon we played 18 holes of golf. And we felt just exactly as we deserved to feel Monday morning. Herb's still hobbling around like an old man. I took the bull by the horns this morning (we're flying afternoons this week) and decided the only way to unstiffen myself was to go out this morning and ride some more. Which I proceeded to do. Enjoyed it muchly. Tomorrow I'm to play some golf. Tennis one of these days too.

Oh about those socks—don't think I could use woolen ones. They'd be too warm. Spring's due around here very soon. In fact it was springy today. Even though the Atlanta papers were full of snow pictures this morning. Seems they had four inches of snow the other day—which is a mighty event. But All-benny didn't have any.

Heard a new CBS program on my widda radio a while ago—Shirley Temple in 'Junior Miss' for Proctor & Gamble. Sounds like it ought to go over big. Didn't you read those Junior Miss stories in Jean's book?

How about that Sportsman show Richard? Get your money's worth of booklets? See any boats? Oh by the way—I understand they're going to ban cameras on the post. Suppose I send it home so you can use it. With the tricky little light meter too.

Sent my income tax in yesterday. Boy that \$80 certainly cuts a big chunk out of my pay check. I suppose its nice I earned that much though. I shudder to think of the tax for next March.

Won't be long I suppose before you'll be whipping up to Sussex. Did you order any tires this year— I don't imagine. After all the broken backs last year. Are there many trees left?

Do you realize in another couple of weeks I'll celebrate my first year in Georgia? Seems like a long long time—but its been an interesting year and has really whipped by fast.

Bye now  
Jack.



**March 11, 1942**

*{Albany, GA}*

Wednesday March 11

Hello—

Here's some pictures of us hard working guys—taken a few weeks ago at Radium Springs. The one with the superb form is I. —the other in the woods is Stan Morrill.

Didn't play golf today though. Tried some tennis with Herb. Felt wonderful but I must have picked up quite a sunburn—my face is really burning tonight.

Like that picture of Frank & Shirley<sup>1</sup>. Where'd he get the handsome coat? And where was the steak picture taken & when? Gad you can almost hear it sizzle.

Got a letter from Canandaigua yesterday—sounds funny to hear about snow—we're having spring down here—that sun is really hot—but it'll probably get cold again any day. Changes awful fast down here.

Still having much fun with my students. Soloed them in the AT-6 after a couple of hours dual—and two of them have made team rides in the AT-9. You never solo the twin-engine jobs—team ride means two students together. Also been having instrument flying, a little night local and a little formation. Getting right along on schedule. Now we hear that quite a few of us (including me) are to be transferred back to Group I (we're now Group II) to start working with a new class soon—turning our present cadets over to some brand new instructors (now that we old experienced instructors have done the harder, more important transition. See what I mean?)

Had a very nice dance here at the club Saturday—wonderful spring night—tops down on all the convertibles—lot of lovely gals—our very good Turner Field orchestra. Fun. Me, I was just a wolf. 'Joyed it!

Bye now  
Jack

1 Shirley Rohlf (1917-1989), married Frank Montmeat in 1943.

**March 21, 1942**

*{Albany, GA}*

Saturday 9PM

Dear folkses—

A fine thing— Saturday night sitting in, listening to Hit Parade. Gad what are we glamour boys coming to. At least some of us.

Just came from a movie at the post theatre—Gracie Allen in Mr. & Mrs. North. Not too good—not nearly as good as the stage show. Now its raining out—rain kept us from flying this afternoon—almost had a cloudburst the plane was two feet under water. Now it looks like we won't fly tomorrow morning either cause its still raining.

We've had a pretty busy week. Did I tell you that some of us were being transferred back to Group I? Well anyway we were. A new class started this week so they grabbed some of us old experienced (?) instructors from Group II where most of the tough (!) transition work had been done and the students pretty well on the way—replaced us with some of the brand new instructors and started us on the new students. So after flying three hours one afternoon, then four hours that night with our old students we came over to Group I the next day and flew that night giving the new instructors some practise landing the AT-6 from the rear seat at night. Then we met our new students and started working with them. After our little experience we should be able to do a little better job. Still find it interesting and the new cadets seem pretty good.

Haven't had much time for golf this week but have spent a couple of mornings playing tennis with Herb. Feels awful good. Plenty hot too—spring's really here.

Finally got that camera sent off today. We're not allowed to keep them on the post so Richard might as well take some good pictures and send me some prints too. Let me know when you get it Richard.

When's Frank due for his commission? I like that coat he has by the way. Looks very smart. How about some pictures in his uniform with little gold bars on his shoulders.

You should see the bicycles gradually creeping onto the field. The boys are starting to think about their tires. I've been walking everywhere on the post except when its raining— Use the Ford only to go into town and Radium Springs. Just had the wheels alined—needed new kingpins. Cost me \$14 but I think

the tires are worth that. At the rate I'm driving they should be good for quite a while—when they wear out I'll get me a bike—or walk. How are the tires on the chevy?

Gad I hope we get a vacation some time. Would I like to whip up home for awhile! Maybe when we finish this class we'll get a couple of days off. Or maybe they'll switch us right back over to the other group for the next class. But if we get anytime at all look out for me. Bye now—Herb wants to go over to a dance at the club—Haven't any date—maybe I'll go over and wolf

Jack.

**March 31, 1942**    {Albany, GA}

Tuesday March 31

Hello again—

Every once in a while you get a big kick out of this instructing business. You start out with your boys and they catch on fast at first—to everything you do & show them. Then you say boy this is going to be easy—they just learn by themselves. Then you gradually let them do more & more by themselves—and the fun begins. Gad they let that plane wander all over the runway on the take-off, it takes them forever to get their wheels up and throttles & prop pitch adjusted—they forget to brake the wheels—then they try to level off and gain three hundred while doing it. Then you gotta tell to make a turn. They're allready too far out from the traffic pattern—then they start letting the wheels down—forget to check their warning signals—lose several hundred feet altitude while doing it—make their turn without looking around at all—forget prop pitch again—whip into the approach at 140 mph instead of 120—roar right up to the field with throttle open & overshoot the field—or cut the throttle too much and scrape the tree tops. Then they fly the plane right into the ground—bounce—haul the stick back to make a bad bounce worse—then flounder all over the runway. You have them draw diagrams of the field and the runways and how they should enter traffic. And they immediately go out and come in entirely wrong. So you begin to feel the whole things

hopeless—they're just plain stupid—or maybe you just can't instruct. So you reread the flight commanders guide and see a million things you should have told them and you wonder if you did.

Then all of a sudden something happens—they come to life. They handle the plane as though they knew what they were doing & start greasing the plane in just as pretty as can be. That's what happened to two of my new cadets today and boy does it feel wonderful—just to sit there without having to say a word—and feel you taught them all about it.

Had fun this last weekend. Had a date with a little gal down from school in Connecticut for spring vacation. Visiting her sister who married one of our boys a month or so ago. Also Herb had a date so four couples of us went out to the Paramount Club & danced. Next day we bowled & had dinner & went to a movie & Marine Room. These northern gals have something few of the southern belles have—lots more interesting.

Then today got your wonderful Easter package. Delicious. First time I've had apple tarte (?) in a long long time—brownies are perfect—candy & jellybeans awful good. And the socks are wonderful. Tanks Muchly.

Guess I'll slip into church Sunday for the Easter service—Its amazing— April allready. I can even rember going to church in Americas a whole year ago. How time flies!

Congratulations to Frank—if he gets his commission April 10th. Lets hear about it. So Richard's a smart guy eh? Wants them to ban automobiles & radios. Gad the cad!

Bye now  
Jack

**April 8, 1942**    *{Albany, GA}*

Wednesday, April 8th

Hello again—

Spring—she really is here—everything turned green last week, everything really blossoming out. I like spring down here. But its getting awful hot—we're still wearing woollen uniforms—there's gotta be a change pretty soon.

Which will cause complications. The regular prescribed uniform for all occasions is the cotton shirt & trousers—but they're not too neat for any extraordinary night gadding about. Which brings up the question of the glamorous white outfit—very smart but a little expensive for the number of times you really need it. So I'm waiting- maybe they'll think of something else—or maybe I'll just be unglamorous. What's Lt. FEM planning to do about it? And when am I gonna know when we have a new lieutenant in the family? Haven't any word other than on or about April 10th.

Students coming along pretty well now—have about 25 hours apiece. Have had them flying formation and instrument the last few days—and night transition. Two of them were pretty poor at instrument at first—so we've been practising basic turns and power let downs hard—they're improving fast. In formation they're still having trouble holding position—but its quite a jump from the little formation they had in a basic trainer to fly different types of formation in a twin engine ship. So it'll take some time. You really see a difference in the way the boys catch on—some right off the bat—others much slower and take a lot of drill & drill.

Had a good time last night— Stan's sister and a friend were down visiting for a couple of days—so we had a date with her (the sister). Good gal—lot of fun—from Connecticut. We had dinner at the hotel—stopped in the Marine Room for a while—then out to the Paramount Club & danced all night. Fun too. They went over to Montgomery today—hope to see them again tomorrow. She's in for a disappointment though—she was awful anxious to have Stan take her for a ride in one of the planes—which in peace time you can sometimes do for someone in your immediate family. But not now. Seems there's a war going on.

Got a letter from Dad in Elmira last week—that Mark Twain Hotel looks like a nice place—and I'd like to see that gliding hill near Elmira. That gliding must really be fun—like to try it some time. Actually you have to do more flying in one of them—here all we do is hang on that engine.

My car insurance just ran out. I had a policy with some unheard of company—at least unheard of by me (-Accident & Casualty Ins Co). Way back in Americus our commandant one

Friday ~~afte~~ morning told us we would not be allowed to use cars until we had insurance. By a strange coincidence that afternoon a representative of this company dropped out and mopped up all the business—cause everyone wanted to use the car for the weekend. But I've ~~just~~ instead of renewing it with that company I've signed with Government Employee Insurance Co—cost me only \$22.30 for personal liability (\$5,000 & \$10,000) and property damage \$5000. One of the beauties of Georgia—nice low rate.

Suppose you know Jean called from Hagerston Saturday night. Had quite a dodging game till I finally got back to her from the flying line at midnight.

Suppose spring is creeping up on Sussex. Going up weekends? And how are all the crops. What are we going to put in this year? Boy I'd like to come up and see. I've just been looking at some of those pictures Richard sent me in the surprise package—a nice view of Lake Marcia & pictures of Richard at camp I guess. Wish there were some decent lakes down here. And some weekends to enjoy them.

Bye now.  
Jack

P.S. Well see if this letter goes thru free!) Let me know.

**April 30, 1942** {*postcard; Sea Island Beach, GA*}

Thursday

Sometimes I feel this army life is not bad at all

J.K.M.

{*Herb Ritter adds:*}

I agree, also.

H W Ritter

**May 7, 1942** {*Albany, GA*}

Thursday, May 7

Dear folkses—

Hard at work again. Tonight—command post alert officer. So naturally I'm plenty alert—so alert I'm just about ready for bed.

Sounds like your all working hard up in Sussex. Sounds good too—I'd enjoy a little grass cutting & wood chopping maybe even ploughing up some few acres & planting some corn & potatoes. Sounds funny to hear of blossoms though. We're way past that stage—feels like we're right in the middle of summer. Its getting too hot to play tennis these afternoons. So we go swimming at Radium Springs. Invigorating too.

Well we got Johnny & Dottie married Tuesday. Had to fly until about 1 AM Monday so couldn't get up for dinner like I was supposed to. But whipped up to Americus soon as I finished—spent the night in the hotel with Johnnie—then at the crack of dawn went over to Dottie's home—for a quick, simple little ceremony—just her big brother (a navy flyer just home a couple of days) another gal & me. And the minister (Baptist). After the job was done Johnnie & Dottie whipped off headed for Florida—we stayed around awhile & chatted then I headed out to Souther Field. (Oh I got one of those neat hostess trays for a present). You oughtta see how old Souther Field has changed. It used to be just a barracks & a mess hall & a field. Now its got a gate, guards, a couple of barracks, office & classroom building, three hangers, mess hall, concrete taxi strip. Classes are just about four times as large as ours. The lieutenant who was second in command is now a Major. Saw my old instructor—had lunch with him—enjoyed it muchly.

Then came back—no flying till night so played some tennis—then a quick swim—then flew five hours of cross country. A good day. Almost feels like going home to go to Americus. Meet a lot of people you know—everything looks so familiar—people all say what a good bunch that first cadet class (us) was & how they wished they had American cadets there now (instead of British)

That Sea Island trip was just for the day—got there about noon- left at 5PM. Gad it was perfect. The island looks beautiful from the air—beautiful beach & neat homes. The airports right on the island. An Eastern Air Lines representative called up the Cloister (the hotel) & had a cab sent out for us. We got some swim trunks—lounged around on the beach—the

water was perfect (71°)—went in the pool for awhile—got some lunch—a quick walk up the beach—tried some sand sailing—just like sailing except your on wheels on the sand instead of water—another quick dip—then dress—then wandered about watching people play croquet, tennis, miniature golf, some other games I don't know, saw gardens etc—then had to head back. Enjoyed it & will have to go again. You oughtta see Sea Island—gives you a different idea about Georgia.

Doing mostly night flying with cadets now. But about twenty new officers have just arrived so we'll have to put them thru an instructor course. Still hoping to finish the class in a few weeks & get some time off but you can't tell. But we can dream can't we.

Jack

**June 3, 1942**    *{typed; Albany, GA}*

Wednesday, June 3

Hello again,

Sorry to take so long to let you know I got back. Have been doing a lot of sleeping and quite a bit of fling- instructors school with a large bunch of new instructors.

Gad it felt awful to get back. And the ride didn't help much. As you probably gathered from my card, I had about seven hours in Washington - enjoyed it muchly just walking about ogling at the buildings and all the people just leaving work, got in the capitol and saw the senate in session for awhile- listened to them talk about the Normandie and the utter confusion in responsibility between the Navy and the contractor. After about a half hour of that, oh yes, saw and heard briefly Senators George of Georgia and Taft of Ohio, we recessed for the day went over and saw the White House- you cant use the side streets alongside it and there are guards all around it, and each brought his rifle up in a smart salute as I went by.

Washington's full of uniforms but not many are 2nd Lts. Then I had a few hours to kill in a movie (regular admission \$.78



men in uniform \$.28) , then some food then time for the train again.

Met one of the boys in the station and rode down the rest of the way with him. We were lucky to get a comfortable car so it wasn't too bad to Atlanta. But now I know what you mean about the ride to Albany.

Train scheduled for 8:10 finally got off at 9:35 and arrived in All-benny at 2:55. I tried to get someone to fly up to Atlanta but everybody seemed to be flying. Next time I'll wait till someone comes to get me.

Reported to the flying line next day and thought I had made some horrible mistake- didn't recognize the group at all. All but a few of the regular boys away on leave, the rest all new instructors. So we've been doing a lot of flying with them. Now I'm all ready for another leave.

It really felt wonderful to be home, and makes it just that much worse to get back here. And boy does it feel hot down here afterfreezing way up north last week. Never satisfied.

(over)

(have to use both sides – paper shortage)

Better stop this now cause I've gotta head over to the line. We were supposed to meet our cadets today but they had to hold off a bit till we can whip these new instructors into shape. And I'm also afraid that Charlie Limberg is not coming to Turner- his name's not on the list.

Remember that tooth that bothered me a bit ?Well its gone. Started the night before last, got worse yesterday than kept me awake all last night. This morning I went over to the dentist, he took one look at it and said Boy that's really gone. Ten minutes later it was out. It was a wisdom tooth way back on the right on top. It was a miserable looking tooth, don't think I'll miss it at all.

I suppose you've gotten a couple of suits and a topcoat I sent via railway express. Would you have them cleaned if you think they need it? Here's a check for it.

Bye now. Watch out for me cause I wanna come home on another leave quick.

**June 9, 1942**    *{Albany, GA}*

Tuesday June 9th

Hello again—

Just completed a little tie pressing session with the little gadget. Works well. Smoothed my ties out nicely—then Stans, now Herbs. Looks like its going to be handy to keep us neat—and that's the way the army desires us.

How do you like my new pen? Just got it the other day at the PX. A Parker Lifetime—one of the nice black & white striped job with the visible ink supply—pocket clip right on top so it slides all the way into the pocket. Very neat. Now all I've gotta do is to keep it—cause they don't replace 'em if you loose 'em.

Got a note from May Dowell the other day. Says she's spending a lot of time up at Green Pond with the Gundlachs—Frank commutes to NY from there—has enough gasoline to drive to Butler. Sounds good especially on these awful hot days we've been having Rain today though—no flying. Looks like it'll continue tomorrow.

I'd just as soon have it clear though so we could keep busy. Nothing much to do on rainy days. Today we went into Albany—did some shopping—then saw a movie—then a bite to eat—then back here.

Am enjoying flying with my British boys. One of them is really good—the other fair. Seem like good men. Right now we're doing transition—shooting landings in the AT-17 & AT-6.

Got a 'CBS Mail Bag' the other day. They wrote to all their boys in the service & asked what they were doing & for a picture. They've put 'em all together & sent them to everybody. Interesting.

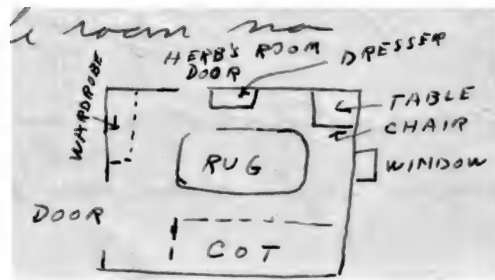
Bye now  
Jack.

June 14, 1942 {Albany, GA}

Sunday June 14th

Dear folks—

Boy you should see my room now. Perk moved out today—got himself a room in town—so I bought a dresser & rug from him plus some odds & ends like a wastebasket & even a few pieces of stationery like this. So my foot locker's tucked away & all my things neatly (but for how long?) in the dresser. And the rugs got beautiful flowers & birds which brighten up the room no end. Looks like this:



Have been having a lot of poor flying weather this week. Usually starts out bad in the morning & finally clears up enough to fly by about ten ayem so that we get a couple of hours flying. So its going pretty slowly. Then afternoon its far too hot to do anything except sleep which we usually do. Then sometimes go out to Radium for some golf in the evening or a swim. Then usually top it off with a movie. Pretty soft. In fact it gets too soft- monotonous. But we'll no doubt make up for it soon as we start night flying. The other group (including Herb) is flying night & day now.

Tomorrow morning we start something new—skeet shooting. They've finally gotten the range finished—tomorrow the instructors go out to learn how to shoot—then we've gotta teach the cadets. No doubt some of our British boys will be skeet shooters from way back.

What I want to know is—does Richard let Dad drive in the dirt rode in Sussex? Seems he promised to.

Tomorrow I suppose you'll be turning in all the old rubber we have hoarded around the house. How much didja find? Guess the double gas ration doesn't make much difference to holders of X cards—but it'll be very convenient for us. I've still five units on my card plus a half a tank full. Which should take me anywhere I wanna go.

Bye now  
Jack

**June 30, 1942**    {*Albany, GA*}

June 30th

Hello again—

Please excuse the long delay. Sometimes this Georgia weather gets you. Get so lazy you can't do anything except lie down and go to sleep. Then the only thing to do is to take a plane—climb up a few thousand feet where its nice and cool—park on a cloud and just watch the view.

Thought last week I was going to be transferred to Maxwell Field. They're starting an instructor's school over there—some of us may be sent over there to instruct instructors. Now we're running our own instructors schools right along with regular student training.

Oh before I forget—think I'll send some more of my civilian clothes home in my brown suitcase—then I'll have less junk to store & carry around. Maybe Richard can use some of the ties & shirts—maybe even the old light weight blue suit.

We've been having trouble with the weather down here this month. Rains an awful lot. Showers every day. So we're way behind schedule.

Finally got my boys started flying the AT-9 They've been working on the AT-17 (twin-engine Cessana trainer) which gives them a pretty good start on the AT-9 which is an awful lot more airplane to handle—and a much smoother plane to fly.

Oh and once again before I forget—think I told you I've arranged to have my monthly check sent to the Paterson National Bank—the checking account I opened there. Anyway

they said they'd send a receipt to me at 492 E. 29 when they got the check. The check will probably be late this month—cause of the pay increase—but when it does come will you let me know? Also \$37.50 is being deducted each month for a U.S. War Bond which will be held in the U.S. Treasury. They're also supposed to send receipts. Will you keep them & let me know if you get them?

As you probably gathered from the card—Perk and I flew over to Sea Island Sunday afternoon. Enjoyed it muchly but the ocean is too warm. The pool is good. (I'll put some pictures of the Cloister in the suitcase—maybe you'd like to stay down there. Only costs about \$18 a day. And that includes meals!)

Now I'm about ready for bed. Have a golf date tomorrow 930 AM. With a gal home from school for the summer— Have played a couple of mornings. She's good & have fun.

Bye now  
Jack.

Isn't that ridiculous. Missed the whole point. Thanks an awful lot for the Autobridge. I've just been playing it. Don't know much about bridge but I will before long. Naturally you expect a lot—or you wouldn't have sent the advanced series. Guess you just think precocious. (Stanley's playing with it right now).

Bye now  
Jack.

P.S. Like that picture of Katherine Meili. Sorry to see her go tho. Everybody's married or about to be. Gad!

**July 7, 1942**    *{typed; Albany, GA}*

Tuesday, July 7th

Hello again,

Something new has been added. According to Special Orders No. 176 War Department 3 July 1942 Paragraph 21 DP the following officers are temp promoted in AUS to grades indicated after name. These promotions unless sooner

terminated, terminate auto upon relief fr active duty etc. etc. --  
under authority of Pub 455 77th Congress etc etc - 2nd Lt. to  
1st Lt: John Kurt Montmeat 0429436. Signed G.C. Marshall  
Chief of Staff. So now he wears a pair of silver bars. They feel  
very good too.

That brightened up the day for us 41-H men the other day. That  
does not mean we now sit back and let the shavetails do the  
work. We keep right on doing what we have been doing. Now  
our cadets are the upper class- we just graduated one bunch.  
And we're way behind schedule- it rains all the time.

That "Ensign" Bob Woodford does surprise me. Seems to me  
they must be dishing these things out a little too easy. Which  
doesn't go over so big with the boys who have gone through  
some training as Frank will probably tell you. Where's Bob  
stationed ? I imagine Don Boyd makes a dashing second  
lieutenant. Bet it's a blow to be in anti-aircraft rather than ski  
troops.

Sorry to hear Ted's accident. Must be a rough experience.

We haven't had any trouble with gasoline down here. I've been  
able to keep pretty well within my ration card and only once  
did my station run out of gas and then had no trouble getting it  
at another station. We're not far from oil wells and its only  
about sixty miles over to Alabama where gas is not rationed.

So old Richard is spending summer in school. But that should  
take only part of the day. How about all the rest of your time?  
Wish I could spend a week at some nice cool lake like  
Hopatcong. Its so darn hot these days and all you see is muddy  
rivers and muddy little ponds. Don't know what we'd do  
without Radium Springs.

Now before I melt I think I'll take me a cool shower.

Bye now,  
*{written:}* Jack  
*{typed:}* John K. Montmeat  
1st Lt. AAF

July 13, 1942 {Montgomery, AL}

Monday July 13th

Dear folkses—

Now look at me. Gad how we do get around. Here I've been in the Army only some sixteen months and allready being stationed in my second state.

Cause here we are at Maxwell Field. Well almost at Maxwell Field.

Think I told you I was over here a couple of weeks ago. Well this time its to stay—and to make it better—Herb's here too. Three of us came over—the other's married<sup>1</sup>.

We're to be stationed here with the central instructors school. Instead of training cadets we'll work on brand new instructors. About which I'll tell you more later when I know more myself.

We just rolled in here tonight—its raining hard so we can't get out to look around—but—Montgomery looks like a good spot. I was here in the daytime for just a couple of hours once before.

Maxwell a good post too. The flying field is small—but the post has a golf course, a couple of swimming pools, tennis courts, etc More about that later too when I've seen more of it. I've only landed there a couple of times.

Anyway it looks interesting. Don't know yet whether we'll have quarters on the post or not. Would be kinda nice change to stay in Montgomery. We'll have to see about that.

Right now I'm about ready to fold up in bed. Was in the control tower until about 4 30 ayem this morning while we polished off some night flying—then up at 10 this morning, packed, cleared Turner Field, drove over (at 35-40 mph) almost falling asleep a couple of times—Enjoyed the ride—first drive in a long time & it feels good here in Alabama to stop at a station & say 'fill'er up. No rationing here. And the country we came thru looks a lot more interesting than Georgia.

So anyway I thought you ought to know my new address so that all the mail can get thru.

Its

LT. \_\_\_\_\_

MAXWELL FIELD

MONTGOMERY, ALABAMA

Goodnight  
Jack

P.S. We really believe in advertising on our envelopes don't we?

JKM

1 Benjamin Ames Laning Jr. (1919-2015).

**July 15, 1942**    *{Montgomery, AL}*

Wednesday July 15th

Hello again—

Just a quick note before dinner. Boy this is the life! Just been swimming in our beautiful pool—now dinner here at the club. And what a club. Real Hollywood stuff! Big lounge—soft chairs—just outside is an open porch then the swimming pool—then beyond the pool two tennis courts—then a nine hole golf course. Down to the right of this lounge room is a great big dining room—then downstairs is a neat bar. Gad!

Theres a BOQ just across the street but not nearly large enough to handle the B.O.'s so we live in town.

And a neat town too—Montgomery—or more accurately a city. Some 100,000 people I think. Hotels, movies, state capital buildings etc etc. And Herb & I got us a nice room in a nice home with a very nice young couple & son. The address is 1327 So Perry St Phone 5338—(but mail should still be addressed to me at Maxwell Field (Central Instructors School (TE) TE meaning twin engine). The rooms a bit small for two of us and all our junk but its nice enough so we don't worry about that. The room's about 4 miles from the post—about 2½ miles to Montgomery center from here—than another 1½ out to the other side of the city. On a street with big shady trees. Gad I'm beginning to feel like a human being again.

And we're going to work too. Instructing instructors is our job. So we'll have to know a lot more about things ourselves...

Bye now  
Jack



**July 25, 1942**    {*Montgomery, AL*}

Wednesday July 15th

Hello again—

Seems to me I wrote from the club here last time too. Just as I was getting along the boys came & swept me into the pool or dinner or something.

Have I already told you this set-up is perfect. So perfect I don't see how it can last. Its so perfect I've finally snapped out of the horrible rut I was in over at Turner.

Here we've got a real school. We're the Central Instructors School for the southeast training center. In fact there are four central instructors schools here—primary, basic, advanced single-engine, advanced twin engine. We're assigned as instructors in the advanced twin engine school. Our students are not Cadets here—they're recently commissioned 2nd lieutenants who have been assigned to be instructors. Just like when we got our commissions we had an instructors school at Turner—these fellows have theirs here.

When you're a cadet all you're doing is learning to fly the plane yourself according to directions somebody gives you. In instructors school you're supposed to learn why you do things, how you do them & how to teach it. Which is quite a job for a couple of weeks.

Up till about a couple of months ago the instructors schools were run by each field. The idea now is to enlarge this Central school at Maxwell so that all instructors will be trained here. Which seems like a good idea.

So we're having an interesting time—not only teaching our students but learning things ourselves. And the men in charge are good.

But thats not all. Guess I've told you we have a neat room in town in a attractive home & wonderful couple<sup>1</sup> (and boy & maid.) And this Montgomery's an awful nice town—especially out in our section—beautiful homes, big trees etc etc. (And Mrs Stakely even arranges dates for us!)

Then this wonderful club. Spend a lot of time here. Usually have lunch here—then spend the afternoon lolling about the pool. Played tennis just once—its awful hot for tennis. Then the golf course—18 hole course right here. Interesting too.

So I don't have to envy Franks set-up any more. Even M.I.T.

Here I've been raving so much and haven't even gotten to tell you about my new car. Now have a beautiful shiny black 1939 Ford convertible sedan (maybe phaeton) White wall tires and all. Radio. My old little job was getting to look so battered I hated to leave it in front of the house. Its piston rings were all shot—needed brake relining. So I got this beautiful car. They wanted \$650 for it—cost me \$350 on top of the old Ford (650 - 350 = \$300 (trade in)—remember I paid \$295 for the old Ford two years ago). Looks like a brand new job—can't tell it from a 1940 Ford & its finish gleams just like a new car. Send you a picture soon as I can find some one with a camera. They really went to work on my old Ford—were going to paint it—put in new piston rings—brakes. I'm anxious to see what they ask for it.

Bye now  
Jack

PS. Thanks for the letter Richard. Keep me informed about the boat.

PPS Whats Frank's new address?

1 Charles A. and Harriotte J. Stakely.

**August 17, 1942** {*Montgomery, AL*}

Monday, August 17th

Hello at last—

Sorry its taken me so long to right. Don't know why—but seems I'm always trying to catch up with sleep. Every time I sit down to write something happens or I start falling asleep. That last week was a honey.

Started a week ago Friday with the A.O. (Airdrome officer) job. That meant I didn't get much sleep Friday night. Then Saturday morning I heard I was going on a ferry trip to Leavenworth, Kansas at noon (A.O. job ends at 11:45 AM). So we started out along about 12:30. Over to Gunter Field by car to pick up the planes. Finally got them all cleared & set out (5

planes) Weather got worse—ran around a couple of storms then finally landed at Tuscaloosa to check weather. They said it was OK so we went on—got as far as Columbus Miss, where it really closed in. So we stopped there for awhile—then it cleared enough so we went on to Memphis. But the reports ahead were bad & it was getting late so we stayed there for the night. Wonderful field too— Red Cross women served coffee & cake & fruit— Some motor corps girls took us into town & even entertained us for the evening. Some service eh? Took us to the country club for a planters punch—then for a delicious steak—finally up on a wonderful roof garden where there was a wonderful dance— Russ Morgan's orchestra—cool & neat view—(and the gal was a smooth dancer).

Then to top it off—who should I run into in the wash room but my old CBS man—Charlie Limberg. He's finishing up his cadet training at Columbus should get his wings in a few weeks.

So as you may well imagine, it was good & late before we finished the evening. In fact it was just about time to take-off. We did get off about 5:30 AM. Beautiful time to fly—just dark before the sun came up. Beautiful to see—just after it came up we got over a solid overcast that looked exactly like a snow field. Then we went over the Ozark Mts—pretty rough with little clearings here & there with shacks & a corn field or something. Then we started coming to flat plains—Kansas—went over Kansas City—seems like a tremendous place—railroads, factories etc. then on to Sherman Field at Leavenworth

Fort Leavenworth is an old Indian fort & you can almost feel them around. Has plenty of atmosphere—reminds you of a college campus. There after a few hours we got a train to Kansas City.—had about six hours to wait there then got on the train—this time I said the heck with the extra nine dollars for sitting up in the coach. This one's on the Army. So I got in my Pullman berth about 9 PM—the next thing I knew it was 7 AM & we were back in Memphis where we had to change back to the coach. Boy did I sleep!

Anyway we had a wonderful trip— I'm anxious to go again— California next time.

We've finished up our class now—waiting for a new one. This morning we spent giving some civilian instructors some twin-engine time—this afternoon flew most of the afternoon practising ourselves. Its so seldom we get a chance to fly—we get kind of rusty. Its quite different from sitting there watching some one else do it.

Oh before I forget- has that bank account been straightened out? Sorry you had to cover it—don't know why this Army Finance dept. doesn't get on the ball & get the checks out on time. Should I make out a check to transfer the money back? And another thing—\$37.50 is supposed to be deducted each month for a bond which is supposed to be held in the treasury. They're supposed to send a receipt for the bond each month. Have they been doing that?

Got a card from Dad in Dunkirk a while back—also a letter from Frank. Gad how these people all get about— Then people going to Sussex for vacations— Gad. Would it make you all happy to know we can buy all the gasoline we want? Course it costs us all of 19 cents a gallon for the regular or 20 cents if you want the high test (Thats on the post—its higher in town.) Course we still have rubber to think about so we don't drive much.

Let me know how the boat sails Richard—in fact you'd better quick send some pictures of it. & the launching.

Now its after 10 PM so naturally little Jack is falling asleep after his arduous day (flew 7 hours today in case you think I'm fooling—topped off with nine holes of golf—terrible and a tremendous buffet supper at the club—two big helpings of spaghetti, meat balls, roast beef, salads, ham, iced tea, milk, rye bread etc etc.—a stag party—regular Monday night feature at the club & good too.)

Bye now  
Jack.

**August 28, 1942** {*Montgomery, AL*}

Friday August 28

Hello again—

Don't know whether or not to make a carbon copy—one for Sussex—one for Paterson. You folks gad about so much!

I'd like to be in Sussex now—we've been having a touch of fall in the air—cold enough for a blanket the other night.

Which is something down here. And the other morning really felt like football weather—leaves blowing around—and being burned. How's all the apples & corn & crops? And how about those floods you sent pictures of—and how'd that racy little sail boat sail. Whats the matter with Culvers lake to sail it? And what kind of center board does it have—retractable? Looked good in the picture.

Gad how the time flies down here—seems we just finished one week end and here's another one. This one's a special one though. Tomorrow at the crack of dawn we're going to fly down to Sebring Florida—where they train combat crews for the B-17's (Flying Fortresses)—and get a chance to fly them. Which should be interesting after our little trainers. Did you notice the picture of the cockpit in last weeks "Life"? And they have a check list a mile long. Did I tell you we were over at Columbus, Miss a couple of weeks ago and got a ride in Lockheed Hudsons although we didn't fly them. Tell you more about handling four engines after the weekend.

We've started a new class a week or so ago. This time British boys who have been instructing in basic schools for six months or so. They've never flown twin-engine planes before, so we've not only got to give them an instructors course—but first teach them to fly. We've been flying afternoons this week—mornings next week. Really enjoying it too. There was really a need for a central instructor school and we really feel we're doing a good job. And important too. We train three or four instructors who go out and train three or four students apiece in each class which sort of multiplies & multiplies. So that anything we do or fail to do really means something. Which sort of keeps us on the ball.

And then on top of the interesting flying—we have a wonderful time in Montgomery & here at the club. Usually have at least one meal a day here—and swim practically every day at our pool. Play golf every now and then- its an expensive course though—awful easy to loose balls. Played out at the

Beauvoir country club course the other morning—that's out on our side of town—and a much gentler course.

Then Saturday nights we usually get out here at least part of the night for the neat dance. All in all a nice set-up.

Saw Mrs Miniver last week—think its one of the best. Saw it practially twice—wouldn't mind seeing it again. Have you-all seen it?

I'll send that check next time—cause I haven't any check forms with me. Hope this Army Finance dept doesn't pull a stunt like that again.

And now to bed—up at 4:30 ayem tomorrow morning.  
Write soon & often

Jack.

**September 7, 1942**    *{Montgomery, AL}*

Monday Sept 7th

Hello again—

Boy this is the life. Here it is a nice hot Monday morning—about 11 AM right now—and here we are sitting at a table alongside the pool under an umbrella to shield our lily white shins from the hot sun—and to shield our lily white eyes from the glare of the dazzling sun. Just took me a dip—the water's perfect just been changed so its plenty cool & had it all to myself too. In a little while I'll be all ready for lunch. Happy happy labor day!

Course right after lunch we'll report to the flying line to fly until 6 PM then about an hour and a half break then fly tonight until about midnight. But its still happy happy labor day.

Here at last is that check. Hope the Army finance has finally gotten on the ball and sent a check this month. They're usually ok once they get the thing in operation. But what a painful process to get them into action! (Just got a bill from Turner Field for officers mess & BOQ fee for the month of August. They were terminated early in July but Turner hasn't missed us yet!)

Have been having a wonderful time these past few weeks. Have met an awful nice girl (Ann Folmar<sup>1</sup>) and have been spending much time swimming & beating golf balls around,

eating, & weekend dances. Very convenient too, she lives right out in Cloverdale near us and works out at the post in operations. Fun.

Then they tell us we're doing a good job here at the central inst. sch. T.E. And its getting bigger. Right now we have just two or three students apiece—soon we're to get four and a dozen more planes. And apparently the training centers like the instructors we're turning out—they want more.

Looks like a big storm a brewing. Write soon. How was the launching of the yacht? And the crops?

Bye now  
Jack

1. First mention in a letter of Ann Augusta Folmar of Troy, Alabama.

**September 10, 1942**    *{Montgomery, AL}*

Thursday, Sept 10th

Hello—

Gad this is a fine situation. Here your son Jack has big, exciting news and can't even call you to tell you about it. The telephone gal says sweetly— "I'm sorry, sir, there will be a two or three hour delay." and how do I know where I'll be in two or three hours? And since telegrams seem to upset you— I'll send this quick air mail

In short, your son Jack is engaged. To a lovely young lady Miss Ann Folmar, of originally Troy, Ala. now Montgomery. (also New York for awhile). You needn't remark—a fast worker your son Jack— I even amaze myself.

I think you'll think she's as wonderful as I ~~think~~ do. I'll send you a picture soon as she has a new one made.

We plan to be married along about Thanksgiving—so you should have plenty of time to plan to come down. And you will come down won't you? Seems to me Frank ought to be down in Florida by then so we can easily fly over to get him.

I'm afraid this sounds awfully incoherent—that is just about the way I feel. Soon as I settle down a bit I'll write and tell you all about it. Gad its wonderful.

Goodnight

Jack.

**September 13, 1942** {from Harriotte Stakely to Jack's mother; Montgomery, AL}

September 13\_1942

Dear Mrs. Montmeat,—

Jack has written you about Anne. Although I am the Mother of a much smaller boy I know you must be wondering what kind of a girl you will soon have in the family. Of course Jack has told you but I want to tell you too.

Anne belongs to an old, well established family—her people have always been well considered. She has the refinement and poise which comes only from a good background.

Anne is pretty but more than that her face has sweetness and strength of character. She is as natural and unassuming as any one I have ever known.

I do not know when I have ever met a girl who impressed me more. I believe you will fall in love with her as quickly as did Jack.

There is just one fault I can find in the match. I hate so much for Jack to leave our home.

We are simply devoted to him. From the first day he came here he has won our complete affection and respect.

He has—I should say is—serious about his job, considerate in the home, and discreet in his choice of friends.

You know all these things about your Son even better than I—but I wanted to take this opportunity to tell you I agree with you 100%. You must be a very proud Mother.

Sincerely  
Harriotte J. Stakely

**September 21, 1942** {Montgomery, AL}

Sept 21st Monday

Dear Mom & Dad—

It was good to get your letter. Here I thought I would floor



you with my surprise and you turn right around and tell me about Frank. Am glad to hear about it—Shirley's really a fine girl. The coincidence in time is amazing.

I know you probably think I'm being awful hasty about this. I would too if I saw anyone else. But I'm so absolutely sure about Ann it seems I've known her forever. I think you can tell about people pretty much the first time you meet them—and the first night I met Ann—for just a few minutes—she had a date with another officer I knew there was the kind of girl I want to marry. I've seen her a lot since then—can't seem to even notice anyone else.

And have a wonderful time whenever I'm with her. Last weekend we went down to Troy—Ann's home—about fifty miles south of Montgomery. Had dinner with her folks—then spent the whole afternoon wandering around meeting aunts, uncles, cousins & friends. Seems the whole town is just one family. And you've never heard anything like the way they rave about how wonderful Ann is (not just family—but mostly friends!)

And her folks are wonderful. Her mother died when Ann was about three—and her father married again. Ann has three brothers—and a step-sister & brother. One brother has just come down to Maxwell enlisted in the army. He's been up in New York for quite a few years—a designer with Jay Thorpe—apparently doing very well. Another brother's an instructor out of a primary flying school in Arkansas.

Think I told you about Ann—went to University of Alabama—then worked in New York for awhile—came back last winter & has been working here at Maxwell for awhile.

Now to get down to business—can you come down to Montgomery for the wedding? I know it's a long rough trip but it's not every day you can see one of your son's married. And I'd like you to meet Ann & her folks. I think you'll like them an awful lot.

The wedding's been moved up. We decided it was such an awful long time & waste of time to wait we've set October 10th. That's a Saturday three weeks from last Saturday. It'll be along about four or five o'clock—and at the home of Ann's cousin (wife of Judge Gardner (on the state court) here in Montgomery—with a reception at the country club.

I haven't looked at train schedules yet but I will & one of these nights when I can get a phone call thru tell you about them. Meanwhile please be sure & plan to come.

I'm just writing to Frank to see if he can be my best man. Maybe we can arrange to fly him down on an army plane. If Frank can't do the job Herb Ritter will carry on.

More later—

Love

Jack.

P.S. Did you get a letter from Harriet Stakely? She said she was writing to you?

J.KM.

**September 28, 1942**    *{Montgomery, AL}*

Monday Sept 28th

Hello again (briefly)—

Just have a minute to tell you about the wedding coming up.

Ann says to wear a floor length dress—gloves—hat veil. She says that's what you will want to know. Is it? The weddings to be at 5:30 PM Saturday which Ann says is a very confusing time because if it were six it would be evening and if it were five it would be afternoon. Which of course is completely confusing. And its to be at a cousin's home—Judge Gardner—with a reception following either there or at some place else—a bridegroom to be doesn't know anything. As you can see.

Here's a clipping from the Montgomery Advertiser yesterday. Don't mind the write-up. Its typical small town and especially small southern town stuff. The society editor is 85 years old and no matter what she's told—that's the way the stuff comes out. And in my haste I left off some of the important stuff about me—the article tells about “before entering the service of his country—employed in a “highly” responsible position by the Columbia Broadcasting Company!) in New York City.

Gad its wonderful that you can come down. See you in less than two weeks. Hot dawg. Takes a wedding to git you down.

Bye now  
Jack.

P.S. Can you quickly as a rabbit send me some addresses  
for wedding invitations & announcements—mostly  
announcements—but maybe a few invitations.

**October 12, 1942**    {*postcard; Point Clear, AL*}

Lt John Montmeat  
Maxwell Field, Ala.

{*Ann writes:*}

Having a good time—wish you were here—

Lots of Love  
Ann

{*Jack adds:*}

Gad—life is beautiful

JKM.

**November 5, 1942**    {*postcard to Ann; Decatur, AL*}

Lt John Montmeat  
Maxwell Field, Ala  
Thurs ayem

Feels like snow this morning. Gad I'm never going away  
alone again. Its horrible!

Love  
JKM.

**November 5, 1942**    {*postcard; Decatur, AL*}

Thurs Nov 5

Up here on a quick ferry trip. Will surely write soon—soon  
as I come down from this dream world I've been in since Oct  
10

Love.  
Jack

**November 5, 1942**    {*postcard to Ann; Orlando, FL*}

Lt John Montmeat  
Maxwell Field, Ala.  
Thursday PM

Here's Jack enjoying himself in this exotic spot. Geez its romantic. And geez I'm sleepy.

Love—Love Love  
Jack.

**November 5, 1942**    {*postcard; Orlando, FL*}

Thurs PM

Gad how this son of yours does get around. You certainly see the countryside in a PT.—you spend so long in one spot.

JKM

**November 5, 1942**    {*telegram to Ann, Orlando, FL*}

MYC8 14 TOUR=ORLANDO FLO NOV 5 931P  
MRS JOHN MONTMEAT=  
CARE M B FOLMAR WALNUT ST TROY ALA=

LIFE INTILERABLY DULL LEAVING TWO AYEM  
SUPPOSEDLY ARRIVING SIX FRIDAY NIGHT MUCH  
MUCH LOVE=

JACK.  
AYEM.

**November 10, 1942**    {*Montgomery, AL*}

(Address is  
15 W Cloverdale Park  
Montgomery, Alabama)

Tuesday November 10

Dear Mother & Dad—

Please forgive me for not writing. I've been in sort of a dream world since October 10th and haven't been able to come to earth long enough to do anything—except just live in bliss.

This marriage business is more perfect than I had ever dreamed. I've forgotten completely what living was like before. Don't think I could ever go back to that single state again.

Ann's wonderful. I thought I really loved her way back a couple of months ago—but looking back from way up here the feeling I had then was just nothing at all. Never had any idea that you could live with someone—spend every minute with her—and each minute feel that you love her more than the last minute.

At the wedding I thought I loved Ann as much as I could love anyone. After a week I was sure it was the peak—couldn't possibly be any better. End of the second week I was beginning to doubt my own little mind that told me it couldn't just keep getting more & more perfect. Now I've given up the idea that the thing is as good as it can ever be. At the end of a month all the weeks before seem just prelude.

What I mean is I really love this gal. Want nothing more than spend a whole life together. And even that would be far too short.

To bring you up to date from October 10th. I thought that was the most beautiful wedding I'd ever seen—& the best reception party. Course I may have been prejudiced but we've heard nothing else but that from hundreds of people. Seemed to me there was a spell about that room during the ceremony—as though everyone was holding his breath (and that spell hasn't broken yet). Then that wonderful reception. And people still rave about how wonderful you looked & were. I didn't know you were so unhappy—but Mrs Habley says she spent quite a while with you & you were crying.)

And I'm horribly sorry about not stopping in to pick up the camera. I must have been sort of confused—didn't realize you were expecting us to come & completely forgot about the camera. Anyway it won't happen again.

Well when we finally got Ann dressed & finished packing we drove off—heading south. We had originally hoped to get to New Orleans—but when we found we had only a couple of days we cut it down to about Mobile. Someone had told us about some places near there. First night we got about seventy-five miles—to a little town—Greenville Alabama—in a broken down little hotel—the William Waller. Spent the night there—next day—a bright beautiful day drove down to Mobile had dinner at some tucky place—then decided we were too sleepy to go further so we came back—went down east shore of Mobile Bay to a perfect spot—the Grand Hotel at Point Clear. One of these beautiful resorts—high fireplaces—some kind of wood like knotty pine (but it wasn't knotty pine) woodwork—southern California style—nautical—in short perfect. Swam, slept, loafed, for a whole day—then had to head back much too quickly.

Back in Montgomery—spent a couple of nights at the Whitley—then found we could have the apartment at Mrs Thetfords along in November so we went out there to stay in Ann's old room till they cleared the other couple out. So there we were sort of crowded in one room until last Saturday.

Oh last week—I had a quick ferry trip by train up to Decatur, Alabama—from there took a PT down to Orlando Fla.—wonderful ride—beautiful color—trees have just about passed their peak now—from there a nice twenty hour train ride—one of those enjoyable crowded—dirty—squally brats train ride you enjoy so much. (Oh & please let me know if you got a small crate of oranges & grapefruit??) And gad was it horrible to be away from Ann & how wonderful it was to have her waiting at the station when I finally got in (two hours late)

And then Saturday we moved into our cute apartment. Gad I wish you could see it. Just perfect. Living room—bed room—kitchen & bath. Bed room's right in front of the house—Five big windows—window seat—big closet. Living room in center—really cozy—lots of book shelves filled with my few books & lot of good ones of Ann's—my little radio—Ann's phonograph—good records—fireplace, etc—you should see our little dinner—with that beautiful silver & plates & candle sticks etc—Had Herb & Pat over last night (spaghetti & meat

balls) delicious too with Pat's help.— Oh & then we have a cute little porch—altho its kind of cool for porches now.

But more about all this later. I've got writers cramp & you no doubt have readers cramp. Please forgive me for not writing sooner—I've certainly been thinking about you & how wonderful it was that you were down for the wedding—hope you can come down again soon & really see us alone.

Love  
Jack

**December 10, 1942**    *{Montgomery, AL}*

Thursday December 10

Dear Mrs M.—

Just a quick note cause I'm about to fly. Sometime maybe I'll come down from this dream and settle down and write some letters.

We do have a toaster and a waffle iron and a coffee maker and an iron. We could use a reading lamp, Ann loves to whip up salads (good ones too!) & would probably be delighted with ~~some~~ salad bowls.

But far be it from me to decide such a thing. You know we'll be awful happy just to know you're all thinking about us—just as we wish we could be home for Christmas.

Judging from the size of the letter I mailed Ann has told you all the news. I'll get on the ball one day and tell you how wonderful life is and Ann is.

Love  
Jack

P.S. Our second anniversary today! And it gets more perfect each day!

\*\*\*



Jack at Turner Field, Albany, Georgia in March 1942.



Jack in Albany, Georgia c. 1942.





Ann and Jack's wedding at the home of Chief Justice Gardner in Montgomery, Alabama, October 10, 1942. Ann and Jack pictured here with Richard (left), and Jack's parents Martha and Frank (right).



Ann and Jack's wedding.



Ann and Jack's wedding, October 10, 1942 in Montgomery. Folmar Family (l to r): Marshall Bibb Folmar, Miriam Woods Pearson Folmar, Miriam "Mimi" Pearson Folmar, Oliver Wiley Folmar, Emory McCord Folmar, Wilson Bibb Folmar II., Ann and Jack, Mary Henderson Black Folmar, James Murphree Folmar.



Ann and Jack's wedding.







*1943 Letters*



*1943: During a routine training flight At Maxwell Field on the morning of January 11, 1943, due to frost on the wings, the plane Jack and a co-pilot were in struck trees during take-off. The plane crashed into the Alabama River. Jack escaped through a broken portion of the back of the plane, after sustaining a broken nose. His co-pilot, Clayton E. Wheat, age 27, of Paris, Kentucky drowned while rescue attempts were made.*

*On January 28, Jack was promoted to captain. On February 25, Jack was transferred to Randolph Field, in Universal City, Texas (14 miles northeast of San Antonio) as part of Bomber Training Squadron IV, Class 43-5. Ann and Jack rented an apartment at the McNay estate in San Antonio during this time.*

*On November 15, Jack was transferred to Orlando, Florida for duty with the newly activated Night Fighter Squadron. Jack was enlisted as a student officer in the 481<sup>st</sup> Night Fighter Operational Training Group.*

*The 1943 chapter contains 43 letters.*

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**January 14, 1943** {Montgomery, AL}

Thursday 1/14/43

Dear folks—

Seems like its taken me an awful long time to write—even a hospital. Actually I've written lots of letters—just never have gotten them down on paper. And we think & talk of you often.

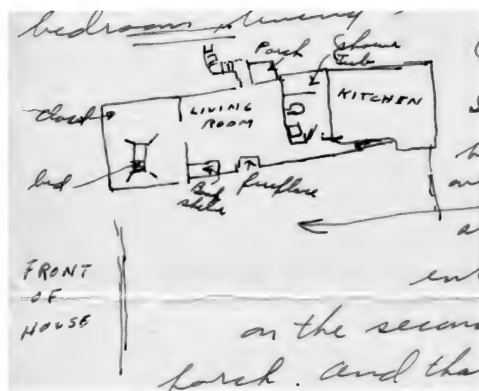
About the crash—rather not speak of it much— Apparently there was frost on the wings when we took off—we got off the ground but couldn't climb—couldn't clear the trees—smashed into them—fell down thru the trees—lost track of things along there—landed in the river. The water must have brought me to cause somehow I got out thru the back of the plane where it had broken—but the other fellow drowned before we could get him out. I don't know I escaped so easily—all I got was a little smashed up face—nose broken and a few stitches in the nose & forehead. They say'll I'll be good as new in just a couple of weeks. In fact I maybe out of the hospital the beginning of next

week—just have to stop in every day for a while to get the dressing changed. Right now I'm using just one eye—the left—cause the right is still swollen although going down nicely. I've got some adhesive tape on my forehead—then a little metal plate vaguely the shape of a nose held in place by a couple of elastic bands around the back of the neck. They just changed the dressing today—they say it looks fine—the nose'll be even prettier than the old.

It's all pretty much of a horrible nightmare to go through—since it can do no good I try not to think about. And everybody's been wonderful about it. Flowers—phone calls—wires—visitors—you can really appreciate it. And this hospital is really tops. They go out of their way to make you comfortable.

And Ann's been perfect. Spends most of the day with me—reads to me & just talk. Her Dad was here the day it happened—which was a big help. Then her mother spent yesterday last night & today with her.

But enough about the accident. Lets go way back to November. I don't know if Ann ever told you about our neat little apartment. Three rooms—bedroom, living room kitchen & bath.



(Excuse the one-eyed perspective) It's the side of a good sized house—the rest of the house over here facing the same way as one across. We have a separate entrance on the side & we're on the second floor & have a nice little porch. And thats a real



fireplace too. We've had it burning several of these cold nights— Mr Folmar brought us a big load of wood from Troy.

So we've been having a perfect time. This married life is the only way to live. Just quiet times in our cozy apartment. We've had a couple of pretty good parties & every now & then we have some people over to dinner or we go to someones (like Herb & Pat.) The Folan's haven't been entertaining much—they're expecting a brand new Folan sometime in the summer & Dotties been having a tough time with some other complications.

Saturday nights we usually get out to the dance at the Beauvoir Country Club or Maxwell or both— Sundays usually get to the beautiful church right next store (a beautiful collegiate gothic type like the administration building at Lehigh) dinner at the club or buffet supper.

Which sounds like we're pretty well settled doesn't it. And just about that time we hear we're about to move. Don't know how much of a military secret but we may be going to San Antonio or somewhere else in a couple of weeks. More about that later when we know definitely but we very likely are going somewhere.

Oh—and thanks awful much for the wonderful Christmas present. The bowls are really neat—make Ann's salads taste really good. Pat's crazy about them too—we've gotta watch the Ritter's to keep them from stealing them.

And you should have seen the neat towels Frank sent—a whole collection of different colored towels & wash rags which we really can use. They really dress up the bathroom.

Don't know if Ann's told you about Teddy—the pup. Awful cute little cocker spaniel—just about three months old now. We're having a little housebreaking problem but with everlasting patience we may be able to teach the little rascal. He's a bright little fellow—cute as can be. We have a lot of fun with him. We'll send you some pictures when & if we ever get around to finish that film.

Got a long interesting letter from Art Williams the other day—first I've heard in a long time. Brought me up to date on all the boys—pretty well scattered too. Oh & we got a note from Mrs Fine. Said they've taken an apartment in Washington for while Mr Fine's on some war work. Also says Harold—

who's at Lehigh & recently pledged Chi Psi—will probably be called within a month or so.

Well that's about enough for one eye for one night. Wish we could see you—its really going to be a great day when we can come home— Better get a couple of spare beds ready. And better get on Frank—he doesn't know what he's missing by not being married! Oh and did you know Ann's brother Wilson is finishing officers candidate school ~~this~~ next week supposed to be up here next week.

Goodnight—love  
Jack

**January 31, 1943**    {*postcard; Troy, AL*}

Lt John Montmeat  
Maxwell Field Ala  
Sunday

{*Ann begins:*}

We're having fun—wish you could be with us—

Love—Ann

{*Jack adds:*}

Just about all healed up—Maybe go back to work this week. Meanwhile having a couple of wonderful days in Troy

JKM

**February 1, 1943**    {*Montgomery, AL*}

{*Ann begins:*}

Dear People—

Kindly forward all future correspondence to Captain and Mrs. John K. Montmeat—effective as of February 1!!!!!!

Captain & Mrs. J.K. Montmeat

{*Jack adds:*}

And begin all correspondence with “SIR”

J.KM.

**February 11, 1943**    {*Montgomery, AL*}

Thursday Feb 11

Dear folks,

Did you know we just celebrated our fourth anniversary yesterday? October 10th to Feb 10th. And it gets better every day. I can't remember ever being not married.

Your note to the new 'captain' was short and uninformative. Me—I'm all better. Got back on the job about a week ago and have been having a leisurely time since—checking out a few majors from Turner Field. Flying about three hours a day—loafing, sleeping etc the rest of the time. Will really get back to work in a couple of days when some new students appear.

Meanwhile right now—I'm stiff as a board if a board could possibly be as stiff as this—from calisthenics. After my long lay-off I went out to exercizes Monday & Tuesday By yesterday I couldn't move so I skipped them. Then today I went again to try to stretch them out—then finally discovered a brand new squash court which another fellow and I formally launched.

Did you get our card from Troy? Ann and I went down the week end before last and had a wonderful time. It's a little town with a big square & court house in the center where every body sees everybody. Seems the Folmars started the town pretty much—used to be the mayors, bankers, real estate, insurance, cotton brokers & everything else. So naturally everybody knows everybody. Mr Folmar took me all around showing me and my nose to everybody in town. And everybody knew all about it & said they were so awful glad to see me up & around.

We spent our weekend Friday night to Sunday afternoon—walking around—eating tremendous breakfasts of country sausage & buckwheat cakes—played some golf with little Emory (Ann's step-brother) with Ann & Mimi as caddies. Big hot dog roast at Ann's Uncle Emory's cabin—Sunday in church—visiting people. Wilson came down Saturday night on the train & rode back with us Sunday night. He by the way had gotten his commission at OCS<sup>1</sup> in Miami and is now stationed at Maxwell. So we had a wonderful time.

Oh—and Ann’s brother Jimmy whom you met at the wedding has a little girl.

Maybe your interested in me. The nose is all healed up except for the places where the stitches were. Theres still a line down there which is gradually healing up—doctor says it’ll disappear entirely before long. The inside has almost entirely cleared up although its still a little sore if I hit it. The bone is all knit up strong as ever and just exactly the shape it was—even after they said it would be much prettier.

You’ll have some pictures soon—we took down at Troy—all with the little white bandage on my nose—just to keep the dirt out of the outside. I’m not wearing that anymore though.

About moving—we haven’t heard anything more about it so until we do we’ll just stay right here.

Lets hear about things. Wheres Frank? Why doesn’t he get married? How’s the skiing Richard?

Bynow—love  
Jack

1 Officer Candidate School, opened in February 1942 in Miami Beach; and closed in June 1944.

**February 28, 1943** {*postcard; Point Clear, AL*}

Capt John Montmeat  
Randolph Field, Texas  
Sunday Feb 28

Finally on our way to Randolph. (San Antonio) Texas. Have to be there Thursday so leisurely on our way— New Orleans this afternoon.

JKM.

**March 1, 1943** {*postcard from Ann to Jack’s parents; New Orleans, LA*}

March 1<sup>st</sup>

We want you to come to N.O.—it’s the most delightful place you can imagine—when you come to San Antonio, we’ll all come back to N.O.

Love, Ann

**March 1, 1943**    {*postcard; New Orleans, LA*}

Capt John Montmeat  
Randolph Field, Texas

Monday March 1

You’d love this town. Right now we’re eating—red table cloth—fireplace in a stone flag court right alongside an old bar.  
JKM

**March 2, 1943**    {*postcard to Jack’s grandfather; New Orleans, LA*}

Tuesday March 2

Hello Pop—

On our way to Randolph Field in San Antonio, Texas. Have spent the last couple of days here in New Orleans—and its been raining all the time.

Ann & Jack.

**May 11, 1943**    {*San Antonio, TX*}

Tuesday May 11th

Dear folks—

Please excuse the inexcusably long delay. I don’t know what happens to time down here but we seem to be doing something or other every minute. We’re gradually settling down tho. And leave it to old Jack to let Mother’s Day slip by too!

Don’t know if Ann has told you all about our new apartment. Gad its wonderful. Have you gotten that booklet of pictures of San Antonio? Maybe you gathered from that that we’re living in style. That picture of “Sunset Hills” just shows

where our door is. The place was a private estate but Mrs McNay<sup>1</sup> is alone so she has built apartments—about four or five in the main building and a few others scattered about the grounds.

And ours is beautiful—wish you could see it. Living room—not too large but beautifully furnished—tremendous bed room—furnished in I think, California style—(just like that Point Clear place we went some seven months ago after that world-shaking wedding). Beautiful bath (with shower & tub) all pink!—and neat little kitchen— Then of course we have our patio. Dear! Dear! And naturally we're in the most beautiful spot in San Antonio—about five miles from the center of town up on a hill from which we get a perfect view of the skyline (looks just like New York midtown) to say nothing of the breeze we get all the time. And we're just as convenient to Randolph Field as we can get and still be in town. Perfect set up.

And maybe you think we don't appreciate having an apartment & being able to eat at home after two months in one room.

And didja know we celebrated our seventh anniversary yesterday (October 10 to May 10th). And it gets more wonderful every day. What's happened to our Frank? Haven't heard anything from or about him for quite a while. And why isn't he married?

Sorry to hear about our naval ace having so much trouble with his tonsils. What's new with the navy?

Oh have you seen the news reel shots of the formal opening of Randolph Field Central Instructors School? We saw some the other night—just a couple of very quick glimpses of a little of the formations we put on. But its so short you can't see anything.

We're going through pretty much the same here as we did at Maxwell. Have to start all over again standardizing the training. Actually its an important job—really needed but we've been doing it too long to be enthusiastic about it. You can't help getting tired of going thru the same thing every four weeks with a new class in the same kind of planes. Had a little break the other day when we got to fly a good sized transport—a Lockheed Lodestar. But that was just a couple of hours. It

would be horribly dull if it weren't for Ann & our beautiful apartment.

We'll have some pictures for you soon. Taken around here and there—mostly of Teddy. He's very photogenic.

And how about some pictures from home. Whats going on. Don't suppose you're getting enough gas to go to the country—so what happens week ends?

Still wish you could come down to see us. Seems to me it was just a year ago I was home last—and its been a long while since you were down in October. Lets hear about everything.

Bye now—love  
Jack.

PS Remember Ruth McDowell—one of the attendants at the wedding (blonde?) She was married last Saturday.

1 Marion Koogler McNay (1883-1950), American artist and art collector. Mrs. McNay inherited a fortune from family oil fields in Kansas, and built a large Spanish Colonial Revival-style home in San Antonio. She rented out apartments in the mansion during the war. Ann and Jack stayed in a apartment at the McNay estate from March-November of 1943. The McNay Art Museum was created by Mrs. McNay upon her death in 1950, with her leaving her home, art collection, and an endowment to create Texas' first modern art museum.

**May 24, 1943** {*postcard from Ann to Jack's parents; Corpus Christi, TX*}

Monday

Wish you could be with us—a nice two-day vacation. A very pretty place and good beach.

Love to you  
from us

**May 24, 1943** {*postcard from Ann to Richard; U.S. Naval Air Base, Corpus Christi, TX*}

Monday

This is where you should be—you'd like it too, you'd look especially good in those white Navy uniforms—very dashing. We'll cross our fingers.

Love from  
Ann & Jack

**July 15, 1943**    {*postcard from Ann to Jack; San Antonio, TX*}

5:00!!!

I'm wavering between leaving and staying—horrible decision—never again! I'm trying to be “happy” about it, though—

Love, love,  
Ann

**July 16, 1943**    {*postcard from Ann to Jack; New Orleans, LA*}

Just arrived and wish you were along. I'm in the Roosevelt en route to the Patio Royal—

Lots of love  
Ann

**July 16, 1943**    {*postcard from Ann to Jack; New Orleans, LA*}

Monday

Wish you were here—remember this food? A wonderful lunch—plane leaves in about 40 minutes—

Love you—  
Ann

**July 16, 1943**    {*postcard from Ann to Jack's parents; New Orleans, LA*}



You should be here—really bustling. Our cab just collided with another car and I'm still shaking. Take care of Jack—  
Much love  
Ann

**July 16, 1943**    {*To Ann; San Antonio, TX*}

Thursday 1:45 AM (Friday)

Darling—

This is too much to bear. Its not worth living without the dream here.

Its been that way all afternoon and night. All afternoon that clock kept getting closer to 5 PM. Until it got there it wasn't so bad—it still seemed like the dream was just a couple of miles away and I could talk to her quick as a flash. Even 5 PM wasn't too bad. I thought 'Hot Dog!' the dream's just getting aboard. Wish I were there to kiss her 'goodbye'.

It was only a little later that the bottom dropped out of things. When I realized that the wonderful one had gone. Was getting further and further away. That I wasn't going to see her in a few minutes. I wasn't going to have dinner with her. Or stagger home and kiss her to death.

Then the little mind started jumping around like mad. Maybe this is just a bad dream (daymare as opposed to nightmare) I'm having. Maybe she got down to the station and changed her mind and stayed. Maybe she'll be there when I get in tonight—a wonderful surprise maybe. So then I called T 4471. You've never heard such an empty ring. So I called Lorelei (how do you spell that) hoping she'd say it was all a great joke.

But she didn't. She said you'd gone. That you'd almost decided to come back—but not quite. And that she was to kiss me goodbye for dream. But no dream.

So I've been going crazy. Went to the pool for a swim. But no dream—no fun. Couldn't have dinner at the club because of 'couple' night. And a fine couple I was.

Naturally everything went wrong night flying. Tail strut was low, prop pitch wouldn't work, windshield dirty, got off late,

my ace student made a mess of night landings, the other students weren't much better.

Usually I can stand a lot of that stuff—cause I know the lovely vision will be waiting (asleep) when I get home.

But tonight there wasn't any lovely vision waiting. There wasn't anything.

But even then I really didn't believe it. Gwin dropped me at the gate—I sort of dragged myself up—it's a beautiful moonlight night) and I'll swear I found myself looking for a light in the window. But not a light—not even a sound when I quietly opened the door. And when I looked at the bed where the darling belongs—it was exactly as we made it this morning.

But there was a note—right under my pillow. A wonderful little note—cause it tells me the dream loves me.

The one that makes this whole little world bright and worth while, loves me. She's miles away right this minute trying to sleep in half (about three quarters I'll bet) of an upper berth. But she loves me. Maybe she's even been thinking of me.

Darling, I'm too tired and sleepy to make any sense tonight but before I can go to bed I've got to tell you I love you, I love you I love you. More than anything in the world. I miss you. I need you. I love you.

Goodnight darling,  
Jack

**July 19, 1943**    *{from Ann to Jack; Troy, AL}*

My beloved one—

You have made me completely homesick—and your letter cinched it. I just thought then I wouldn't be able to stand it—why do you do me this way?

I had visions of your being in Paterson about 8 o'clock last night—I hope I wasn't too optimistic but your luck constantly amazes me, so I'm sure you made it home in record time.

We had lunch at the Pickwick after you left and I longed for you. I had Roquefort Cheese dressing on my salad and I know how the Dream would go for that. Then I began to have sinking pains when the reality faced me—you had actually gone and I wasn't going to see you for days. Please let's never take another

vacation—please. I hope you're enjoying your bachelorhood because I don't think it will ever happen to you again!

We went next store and had cocktails with the Vaughans yesterday afternoon—and they were crushed that you couldn't be along. They heard your whistle the night before—and had waited for you to get here (like we did) so they were very interested in the whole thing.

I retired quite early last night with my thoughts of my husband—and wished you were back. This life doesn't exactly suit me—it's perfect when you're here and imperfect when you're not—so please hurry back.

Let me know well in advance when you plan to arrive so there won't be that mad confusion again. We all are awaiting the great Captain so try to get here "pronto".

Give the Montmeats our best—and my love—and bring them along if you can. Be sure to make them spoil you completely—I don't want you to get out of practice. I miss you and love you more than ever—please come home, honey.

Ann  
Monday

**July 20, 1943**    {*postcard to Ann; New York, NY*}

Capt John Montmeat  
Randolph Field, Texas  
Tuesday.

Boy look at me now! Right in the middle of the big city.  
Cheez—what big buildings & what a lot of people.

Love Love Love Love  
JKM

**July 20, 1943**    {*from Ann to Jack; Troy, AL*}

Honey—

This is getting to be too much and I don't know how much longer I'm going to be able to stand it—so I suggest you make a hurried trip to Alabama.

It has rained and turned somewhat cooler (thank Heavens)—and I've rolled bandages at the Red Cross—but

nothing else has happened and I'm homesick and want to go back to San Antonio with you.

Daddy came in tonight and surprised us. He thought he wouldn't get back until Friday.

I hope your trip is gay and exciting and you're seeing everybody. I wish I had gone with you—this is terrible, believe me—and I never intend being a widow again—never.

Is it really true I'm married or was it some kind of dream I had? It's all too good to be true that I have the world's best husband, the world's best apartment and I'm the world's happiest creature (usually)—so I'm sure I dreamed it since none of it is present at the moment!

Hurry back, you dream—oh how I love you and long to see you—maybe one day I'll get over this frantic, restless upheaval and be normal—until then—

'Bye darling  
Ann  
Tuesday

**July 20, 1943** {telegram to Ann; New York, NY}

.MYM3 13 NL=NEWYORK NY 20 IS=...

MRS JOHN MONTMEAT=

CARE MR M B FOLMAR WALNUT ST TROY ALA=

CANT STAND BEING AWAY ANY LONGER HEADING  
SOUTH CRACK OF DAWN THURSDAY LOVE=

JACK.

**July 22, 1943** {telegram to Ann; Bolling Field, Washington, DC}

MYP44 13=WUX BOLLINGFIELD DC 22 120P

MRS JOHN MONTMEAT, CARE M B FOLMAR=

WALNUT ST TROY ALA=

ETA MAXWELL 1930 CST WITH MAJOR BALDWIN  
PLEASE DO NOT BE ELUSIVE LOVE=

JACK.  
ETA 1930 CST.

**July 23, 1943** {*postcard; Troy, AL*}

Capt. John Montmeat  
Randolph Field, Texas  
Friday

Pulled in to Maxwell at 7:30 PM CST last night. Got in Washington about 11 AM—had lunch went to the airport and in about ten minutes ran into a Major I knew who took off for Maxwell about 3 PM. Lucky eh. As you can see its cool down here!<sup>1</sup>

JKM

1 Front of postcard depicts a snow scene.

**July 24, 1943** {*telegram to Ann; San Antonio, TX*}

MYP10 14 NL=SANANTONIO TEX JULY 24  
MRS JOHN MONTMEAT=  
CARE M B FOLMAR WALNUT ST TROY ALA=

=LANDED KELLY 2045 SATURDAY THIS ARMY  
REALLY GIVES SERVICE PLEASE HURRY HOME  
MUCH LOVE=

JACK.  
2045.

**July 26, 1943** {*telegram from Ann to Jack; New Orleans, LA*}

NSA34 9 NL=NEWORLEANS LA 26  
CAPT JOHN MONTMEAT=

SUNSET HILLS TRAVIS 4471 SANANTONIO TEX=  
{written:} Box 78 Randolph Field Tex

AWAITING IMPATIENTLY TOMORROW AFTERNOON.  
BE SWEET LOTS OF LOVE=

ANN.

**August 8, 1943**    {San Antonio, TX}

Sunday August 8

Dear folks,

Seems like a long long time ago that I was in Paterson. I'm all ready to come again—only next time with Ann and I hope driving. leisurely.

My luck held out beautifully all the way back. After I left Art in Washington (after a lunch at Childs on Wrights—entertaining customers) I went out to the army field—Bolling Field. It was a good taxi ride out there really saw Washington which always fascinates me. Would like to have stayed to see it. Anyway at Bolling, the Army really takes care of its boys. They have a reception room with a WAC who has a list of all the planes leaving & how many passengers they can take. So she started to find if a plane going to Eglin Field could take me. But just then I ran into a Major I knew from Maxwell—in fact he had given me my check rides back in primary in Americus. So sure enough he was heading right for Maxwell at 3 PM. Just to rub it in I found he had left La Guardia Field at ten that morning—I could have saved that 6 AM business altogether. Although I enjoyed the ride down with Art and the ~~pla~~ train was uncrowded & air conditioned.

So I rode down with the Major and a barrel of ice and real live lobsters. He was combining pleasure with business. We made just one stop at Bennettsville S.C.—then pulled into Maxwell about 7 PM. Ann met me there a little later—we went downtown & had dinner—then out to Troy. Had a fine time in Troy the next day—Friday—just wandering around town mailing post cards, sending typewriter, seeing people, drinking cokes, wading in a kiddie's swimming pool—the main pool

was being white washed—then had dinner at a friend of Ann's along with Frances Brown the little peanut girl you met at the wedding—she asked about you all.

The next day Saturday Ann took me to Maxwell and after waiting around a couple of hours— I got a ride to New Orleans. About fifteen minutes later I picked up a ride right to Kelly Field (on the other side of San Antonio.) I guess I really should have held out for a ride directly to Randolph.

So I pulled into the apartment sometime late Saturday night. Seems to me that was really traveling. Must have covered well over 3000 miles in a week with three days home & another day in Troy. Maybe this airplane is here to stay.

Was pleasantly suprised when I got out to Randolph to find we were getting B-25's in. Haven't flown them much yet because they're having trouble getting parts to keep them in shape—but we're supposed to get a whole bunch of them very soon—to use in our student training. It's a beautiful airplane. That's the kind that Jimmy Doolittle used to bomb Tokyo.

The day after—Sunday immediately got back to work to finish up that class in Thursday. Ann came in by train on Tuesday—a great day. She had been lucky—had a good air conditioned car so the trip wasn't too bad.

Our apartment looks better than ever. Its been terrifically hot these last couple of weeks and the apartment's a little haven. The coolest spot around. It takes a lot to make us leave it at all. We go out now & then for a quick swim at the club or to try out Ann's golf clubs—she likes them much.

Last night (Ann's birthday) we had a little party before going out to the dance at Randolph. Had a good time but missed Johnny Folan & Herb. The Folan's are tied up a bit these days with John Denis Folan born July 20th 9lbs 5oz—a big fellow! And Pat wasn't feeling well last night.

It was great being home even for the quick visit. Maybe this fool war will be over before very many more years and we'll be back—homeless & jobless & you'll have to support us. Meanwhile why don't you come to beautiful hot San Antonio to see us.

Love  
Jack.

PS. Thanks for FEM's address— I want to write before the 16th..

1 The Women's Army Corps.

2 General Jimmy Doolittle, with the U.S. Army Air Corps, conducted the first retaliatory bombings in 1942 of Japan after the attack on Pearl Harbor.

**September 5, 1943**

*{San Antonio, TX}*

Sunday September 5th

Dear Mom & Dad—

That was a blow to hear about Pop<sup>1</sup>. Although the real shock was in Paterson when I saw him the night I got home. I guess we all knew it was a matter of very short time. I guess Pop knew it too.

As long as it had to happen, I'm glad it happened quickly and peacefully. As Time always says— "As it must to all men..... I imagine Pop felt he had lived as long as he wanted, and was ready for something new. Mom, I hope you feel that way and are not taking it in too bad shape.

Wish I could have been there to help out. Meanwhile here's a check for the flowers I hope you get for us.

Ann and I are having a vacation right now. They have changed the policy to give newly commissioned officers a ten day leave between their graduation and reporting for duty. So for the first Class to get it we too get it. We're spending it quietly right here in San Antonio—sleeping, reading, swimming & golf. Its usually so hot you have no energy to do anything but sleep.

Lets hear about everything. Mom, why don't you come down to San Antonio to visit us? It should be fine here in the fall.

Love,  
Jack.

1 Jack's maternal grandfather Edward Mehringer (1865-1943).

**September 18, 1943**

*{postcard; San Angelo, TX}*



Capt JK Montmeat  
0-429436

Randolph Field  
Texas

Sept 18

This is just in case I don't get to write something before.  
Meanwhile Happy Birthday & Happy Anniversary

Love—  
Jack

**September 18, 1943** {*postcard; San Angelo Army  
Bombardier School, San Angelo, TX*}

Capt J.K. Montmeat  
0-429436

RANDOLPH FIELD, TEXAS  
SATURDAY SEPT 18th

Brought all our planes over here to dodge a hurricane which  
is still hovering off the coast. Now its being coy and refusing to  
come.

Love.  
Jack

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

**September 18, 1943** {*postcard to Ann; San Angelo Army  
Bombardier School, San Angelo, TX*}

Capt. JK Montmeat  
0-429436

RANDOLPH FIELD TEXAS  
SATURDAY:

This is maddening (sp?) You've spoiled any place for me  
unless you're there. And a fine thing anyway—at the first sign  
of trouble what does the brave air corps do but hop into its  
planes and flee to safety leaving the helpless women & chil.

Love Love Love

Jack

October 5, 1943

*{from Jack's mother; Paterson, NJ}*

October 5, 1943.

Dear Ann and Jack,

Shirley and Frank left at noon today and it is very quiet again. Franks train was to leave at 2:<sup>35</sup>—he has to report any time tomorrow. Shirley is going back home for a couple of weeks. I think she said in about three weeks she will join Frank in Tampa. They came back from Great Barrington Saturday night. It had been raining so they came a day sooner than the expected. It was nice to have them with us a couple of days. We had the Rohlf's<sup>1</sup> over for dinner on Sunday and we were all over there on Monday.—they wanted us to come over and see all the gifts which had arrived while they ~~are~~ were away.

But before I go any farther I must tell you that I received the very nice gift yesterday which you sent me—such a nice dress and blouse, I just hate to tell you Ann, you flatter me with a size 16—I'm fatter than that and it is just too small—I am one of those half size people—small at the top—thick in the middle. I usually buy an 18½, sometimes 20 (a little large) fits with a little alteration but the half size seems best. The blouse fits and looks nice on but the jacket and skirt just won't make the waist line.

I really dislike to have to write this but I don't know what else to do. I like the model it looks well on so tell me if it won't be too much trouble to exchange it—if only it wasn't so far I would run over and go with you.

Now that very important anniversary, I've been thinking of it a long time, it doesn't seem possible that it is already a year—

When we don't want it to the time goes by so quickly.

Some day, I hope to get straightened out and be able to keep up with current events, we have had so much upset and excitement I am all mixed up but pretty soon you should find a package for that "paper anniversary". In the mean time know that we were thinking of you and wishing so much you could have been with us at Franks wedding.

Dad is waiting for me to finish, we are going to run up to the country and maybe close up the place in case we don't get up again. Its kinda lonesome there now.

I will wait to hear from you soon, and thanks again— Our love to you both

as ever—keep well  
Mother.

P.S. Say Hello to Jack!

I almost forgot. You asked me to suggest something for Shirley and Frank. ~~From~~ Judging from what I have seen—it seems to me a blanket would be very nice, they received a nice Puff Quilt but have no blanket seems that would make a nice gift to them. I guess any shade of rose would be nice the quilt is “dubonett”

Oct. 9<sup>Th</sup>

1 Shirley's family.

**October 7, 1943**

*{from Miriam<sup>1</sup> to Ann; Troy, AL }*

Thursday

Dear Ann,

I have been thinking about you & Jack all this week and going over in my mind the same week a year ago—What a happy occasion and what a good time everybody had on Oct. 10—It will always be a happy memory! Wish you & Jack could be here in Montgomery & we would go out to the Blue Moon and have a real celebration this year—What are you all planning to do? —Just wanted to write you a note to tell you we were thinking about you & Jack, and hope there will be many, many anniversaries each one just as happy as this one will be—

Lots of love  
Miriam—

Do you recognize this paper? —Some you left here—How did your dresses fit?

1 Miriam Woods Pearson Folmar (1900-1998), Ann's stepmother.  
Miriam married Marshall Bibb Folmar on June 8, 1927 in Troy, Alabama.

**October 9, 1943**

*{card from Frank; Tampa, FL}*

Dear Ann & Jack,

I'm afraid this is a little late—I hope you will excuse the delay. Of course I have had a few others things on my mind the last few days. I'm now waiting impatiently for Shirley to get down here.

F.

*{signed by Frank:}* Shirley & Frank

**October 27, 1943**

*{San Antonio, TX}*

Wednesday October 27th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Thanks much for our wonderful little anniversary presents. That writing paper—etching volume—is the cutest thing we've seen for a long time. Its right in front of me now. I was going to write on it now but it looked a little small. We may have to keep it just for the beautiful etchings. And those pads & napkins & card are really nice. That's really a paper anniversary.

Isn't it amazing how quickly this first year has whipped by. What a wonderful year too. I thought I was in love with Ann last year. The way I feel this year though makes last year seem like just a passing fancy. It gets more perfect all the time. We think of it all the time—especially as we wander around our beautiful golf course these fall afternoons. Just exactly like the crisp afternoons we spent on the Beauvoir in Montgomery last fall before we were married, only more so. Then we come in to the Club and sit around for awhile while Ann plays the piano. I can't wait for you to hear her play—its marvelous—you just have to hum something and Ann can pick it out—and not in any monotonous play-by-ear style either.

Excuse me—just had to go out to put some more juice on a slice of ham in the oven. Ann's taking a short nap cause she's just come back from most of the day down town. She came back to find me sleeping my usual afternoon nap.

While she was there she exchanged your dress. She says the new one is a different color—brown I think. Hope you like this one too.

Oh—some news for you—or maybe it won't be news—but the Ritters are going to be fathers. In April or May I think. Can you imagine Herb as a Daddy. Johnny Folan's the real established father now. Spends most of the time bragging about the jr. Folan. And did you know that Herbs promotion finally came through? So he's feeling pretty good with the world these days—new captaincy, new car (slightly used Plymouth), and baby coming. The Ritters had us out a couple of weeks ago—dinner at La Lousiane a little French place in San Antonio which almost but not quite gets that New Orleans touch—then to see Don Amecke in 'Heaven can Wait.' We've gotten to be quite the movie fans or else there have been a lot of good pictures lately—think we're going to see Watch on the Rhine tonight.

Aside from movies we get most of our entertainment right here in our beautiful apartment or at the country club. Last night we were over across the patio to enjoy some delicious apple pie with the Robie's with some apples from Maine—and enjoy their fireplace. Nights are really getting cold down here—and mornings too at 6 AM when we get up! We're going to have to steal some wood for our fireplace soon. We've got a neat heating system. Hot air comes in from the central heating place in the house and then we also have gas heaters built right in the walls in the living room, bed room & bath. It's a wonderful quick way to warm the room up. Takes just a couple of minutes on a cold morning. The apartment seems more beautiful all the time. Wish you could see. Of course to add to the excitement and keep realizing ~~you~~ we're in Texas we have rattlesnakes on the place. The gardener caught two a week or two ago and we saw one in the driveway last Friday night. No Indians though.

Most of the rest of the non-working time is spent at the Country Club. We often go over there to play golf then have

dinner—the best steaks in town—then sit around while Ann plays. Every couple of weeks we go out to the Randolph Field Club for a dance—wonderful buffet supper too. The Clubs just been remodeled & looks wonderful (Ann just got up and checked on the ham & says I'm doing a nice job. She wants me to read this to her but I'm refusing because it'll make her too conceited.) (She says please—but I'm being firm!) (Dream says to tell you about the orchid and the pair of gloves I gave her for our anniversary. And the dinner & dance we had at the Anacacho Room at the St Anthony Hotel (a beautiful place.)

Frank's wedding sounds wonderful—wish we could have been there. We got a card from Pittsf Berkshires. Looked awful good. We got a letter from Richard. Bet he's having a great time with those planes. Bye now. Lets hear from you all soon & how about some pictures of the wedding

Love  
Jack.

**c. October 27, 1943** {small note; San Antonio, TX}

{Ann writes:}

Honey—

I've gone to the theer-tah— Watch on the Rhine—aren't you jealous?

Ann

{Jack writes on verso:}

Of course I'm jealous

(signed)  
“Honey”

**November 16, 1943** {postcard; San Antonio, TX}

Tuesday November 16

Dear People—

Orders changed to leave Randolph about the 25th of November. Gives us a nice ride thru New Orleans & Troy. Let

you know more later. Sounds very interesting. Maybe see Frank & Richard.

Love  
Jack

**November 23, 1943**    {*postcard; New Orleans, LA*}

{*Frank begins:*}

Dear Mother & Dad—

Just had a bite of chow at this place as well as a lot of chatter

Frank

{*Ann adds:*}

Wish you were here—

Ann—

{*Jack adds:*}

Gad I'm sleepy—wish you were here

Jack

{*Frank adds with arrow leading to his writing:*}

FRANK (HIS MARK)  
WRIT BY HAND

**November 24, 1943**    {*postcard; New Orleans, LA*}

~~Tu~~ Wednesday

Just put Frank on the train last night—this morning we're heading for Point Clear in Mobile. Had a great time here in New Orleans with Frank. Hope to see Shirley in Tampa.

Love  
Ann & Jack

**November 25, 1943**    {*postcard from Ann to Jack's parents; Point Clear, AL*}

Thurs.

We're back at our honeymoon-spot—and its really just that.  
Wish you could see this place. Will be in Troy for  
Thanksgiving dinner tonight—

Lots of Love from  
Ann & Jack

**November 27, 1943** {*postcard; Maxwell Field,  
Montgomery, AL*}

Saturday

{*Ann begins:*}

Does this look familiar? It's really good to get back—We're  
heading South tomorrow.

Ann

{*Bibb Folmar<sup>1</sup> adds:*}

Having lunch with Jack & Anne. We all are so happy to see  
them. Both are fine My regards to each member of your family  
Bibb Folmar

{*Jack adds:*}

“Hey”

JKM

1 Marshall Bibb Folmar (1887-1968), Ann's father.

**November 30, 1943** {*postcard; Orlando, FL*}

Tuesday Nov 30

Getting way down deep in the south now. My little Ford  
feels right at home with its Univ. of Florida sticker here in  
Gainesville. Should be down in Orlando tonight. Had a  
wonderful time in Troy.

Love  
Ann & Jack.

**December 1, 1943** {*postcard; Orlando, FL*}

{*Ann begins:*}



Wednesday afternoon

Orlando's a fine spot—we like it. Nice and warm right now—will be cold tonight, though.

*{Jack adds:}*

We haven't seen this monstrous sight yet but we probably will.<sup>1</sup> We've seen everything else. Just got us a cute apartment  
AFM & JKM

1 Front of card shows Illuminated Fountain on Lake Ivanhoe

**December 4, 1943**    *{postcard; Orlando, FL}*

*{Ann begins:}*

Saturday—

We're going to write soon (believe it or not) Like Orlando fine—it's like summer.

*{Jack adds:}*

Hey Ma—

Yes we will write—tomorrow maybe—to tell you all about this beautiful set-up But no snow.

Bye now

Jack

*{Jack adds arrow to Ann's writing:}* ANN

**December 9, 1943**    *{Orlando, FL}*

348<sup>TH</sup> Night Fighter Squadron

AAFTAC

Orlando Florida.

Dear Mom & Dad—

Sorry its taken so long since I've written. We've really kept moving. I'm not sure how much of the story you know from Ann or Frank. But we're on our way to combat in a couple of months.

I suppose you got our cards from New Orleans & Orlando so have an idea where we are and knew we saw Frank a couple of days.

Anyway we left San Antonio November 20th. Our orders were effective the 25th but we arranged a five day leave until then and didn't have to go back. Which gave us a nice vacation. But it was a ridiculous trip between trouble with keeping Teddy, for, me picking up a cold, Ann a headache, thinking we weren't going to get a room in New Orleans, a room in the noisiest hotel in the world in Houston, a flat tire on one of our old recaps and other miscellaneous items.

We were ready to leave San Antonio and Randolph. We had a good time there and a bunch of nice chums and a nice apartment. But San Antonio was overflowing with army with five army camps around it. And Randolph was slowly driving everyone crazy with its ridiculous rules & regulations & restrictions. And the work—flying the same planes in the same job, day after day for over two years was plenty. So we were eager to leave the much overrated Texas.

Had a good time in New Orleans seeing Frank. We pulled in there Monday afternoon to find the Hotel where we were supposed to stay had no rooms. But then we found Frank registered but not in. So we invaded his room and made ourselves at home. Ann tried to sleep off her headache while I worked on a room which we finally got. Then Frank came back—had dinner—walked around awhile—met Mr. Fine (Bill Fine's father) on a government lecture tour— Tuesday we walked & drove around some—then went to the Hotel Roosevelt for dinner—then put Frank on a nice streamliner.

Frank looks fine. Seems funny to think of him taking care of all that bunch out in the woods. And he was picking up stuff in New Orleans for the boys Thanksgiving dinner table decorations. Too bad he can't stay with Shirley.

We hoped to get over to Tampa to see Shirley and also over to Melbourne to see Richard but I picked up a beautiful cold in Montgomery and stayed in bed a couple of days in Troy so we didn't ~~get~~ have any extra time. We understood Portia—who was married to Ann's brother "Tunker" who is now in California—had planned to see Shirley some time. Her home is in Tampa.

I've flown over Melbourne a couple of times this week but haven't yet been able to get permission or time to land there. I'd love to drop in on our little sailor one day. It looks very nice from the air.

This Orlando is a beautiful place. Quiet. Big trees, nice homes and a nice shopping center. But entirely residential—no big industries at all except oranges and grapefruit. Reminds me in a way of Ocean Grove—looks like a Methodist resort for old folks. Plenty of benches to rest on. Quiet rooms & apartments.

We're were lucky to pick up a cute little garage apartment the second day we were here. Just a kitchen, bedroom and bath. Simple but nice in back of a big home with a very pleasant screwball family. Quite a change from our luxurious San Antonio place. Here we have even a kerosene heater and kerosene water heater. No shower—just a small tub. But its wonderful. And we can keep Teddy right with which gives Ann a lot of fun. He's a great character to have around.

And the field is really a relief from Randolph. Instead of the elaborate, permanent set up a Randolph with foreign air chiefs continually inspecting things, without all the fancy rules, this field has just been built in the Florida jungle within the past couple of years. And it looks like it knows a war is going on.

AAFTAC stands for Army Air Forces Tactical Air Center. You've probably read about this place. Here is where they study & try out all the latest combat information right back from the theatres. A whole section of Florida is used with satellite fields all over—simulating combat conditions. Right now we're at the main base.

We're training for a night fighter squadron. We start off by flying A-20's which you've probably seen buzzing along just above the tree tops across the French coast. They're twin engine—just one pilot—gunner & radio operator. Night fighters are versions of this plane equipped with radar of which you've probably read. Its amazing stuff as Frank has probably told you. This is the just the ~~reverse of what~~ same stuff that Frank does. He spots enemy planes from the ground. When the equipment is put in the plane, the radar operator does the finding. We've got a lot to learn about it but its amazing.

The plane is perfect. You can't imagine how good it feels to fly a real plane yourself after sitting in a trainer so long letting

some one else fly. And it feels great to be a student again.  
Course they only keep ~~up~~ us busy about twelve hours a day—  
what with transition flying, instrument flying, night flying,  
ground school etc. In fact thats why this letter is so sloppy—  
cause I'm so sleepy. Lets hear from you soon— (I think our  
school is being moved out to California within ~~a couple of~~ a  
few weeks)

Meanwhile love from Ann & me  
Jack.

Ann says say Hello for her

JKM

'Hello'

*{Jack adds with arrow to large ink blot:} Pls excuse this*

\*\*\*



Bandaged on February 1, 1943, a few weeks after the plane crash at Maxwell Field.



Jack at the McNay estate in San Antonio, 1943.



Ann in front of the gardens at the McNay estate in San Antonio, 1943.



Jack at the McNay estate in San Antonio, 1943.



Ann with Frank in front of St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, Louisiana, late November 1943.



Jack and Frank in front of St. Louis Cathedral in New Orleans, Louisiana, late November 1943.



Frank and Shirley Rohlfs Montmeat at Minute Man Statue, Concord, Massachusetts, c. 1943.





Ann with Richard in Orlando, December 1943.



Jack, Richard, and Teddy in Orlando, December 1943.





## 1944 Letters



*1944: During January, the 481<sup>st</sup> Night Fighter Operational Training Group and the 348<sup>th</sup> Night Fighter Squadron were moved from Orlando, Florida to Hammer Field in Fresno, California. Ann and Jack's drive to California took them through Ann's hometown of Troy, San Antonio, Texas, and the Grand Canyon.*

*On February 25, Jack was assigned to the 420<sup>th</sup> Night Fighter Squadron, training on P-70's.*

*On May 24, Jack wrote to his parents to tell them they will be grandparents, with Ann's due date around Christmas. Also, he let them know his overseas deployment is imminent.*

*On June 6, Jack was transferred to Hamilton Field, north of San Francisco, with the Fourth Air Force. Ann departed for Montgomery to await the birth of their child. On June 11, Jack was transferred by rail from California to Massachusetts, then to New York, to await shipment by water to the European Theater of War. Jack was able to make a trip home to Paterson on his birthday, June 24.*

*In the first days of July, Jack was aboard the RMS Mauretania to the UK, and near York and Durham, England by July 9. Jack is with the 425<sup>th</sup> Night Fighter Squadron at this point. During this time Jack started flying the Northrop P-61 Black Widow. Designed specifically for night fighting, the crew consisted of a pilot, radar operator, and gunner.*

*By late August, Jack was in France, based at a captured German field, flying reconnaissance missions at night in the P-61 of Luftwaffe and ground targets. Jack visited Paris on September 17.*

*Jack was awarded the air medal on October 10 for "meritorious achievement while participating in aerial flight in the European Theater of Operations".*

*On December 14, Ann sent Jack a telegram announcing their daughter Martha Ann had been born (on December 11).*

*The 1944 chapter contains 54 letters.*

\*\*\*

**January 11, 1944**    {Orlando, FL}

January 11, 1944

Dear Mom & Dad—

These last couple of weeks have really been something. Just after Christmas, Ann picked up some flu or gripe or something and went to bed, feeling aches, nose running, sneezing etc & stayed there on and off for about a week. Then just after she had gotten up feeling fine again good old Jack decided it was time for him to get some attention so he went to bed.

Don't let anyone ever talk you into coming to Florida for the winter. It's the coldest place I've ever seen I think. And the worst part is you never get warm. Early in the morning its always damp & disagreeable as can be. Usually a heavy fog forms. Then as the sun comes up the fog gradually burns off & It gets warmer and warmer until by afternoon its hot. Then as soon as the sun goes down it gets cold again. You go crazy trying to wear the right clothes. And since the buildings are always colder than it is outside—you break down after a few weeks. The only places you find heat are too hot.

Went down to Miami last week. Flew a general down Tuesday afternoon, came back Wednesday. Naturally I figured it would be nice & warm down there so just wore my blouse. So naturally it was colder than ever and that's what started me to bed.

Miami Beach is very nice. Unusual. Winding streets, palm trees, nice homes—

I stayed with the family of the girl who is going to marry a boy who flew down with me. Had a very pleasant time—they were awfully nice—originally from Philadelphia—he had decided he'd worked long enough so he just quit & moved down there. His big interests there are dog racing & gold. Seems to enjoy it. I don't think I could enjoy it much. Miami itself (as opposed to Miami Beach) is just horribly overcrowded, sailors, people, sailors, waves soldiers etc.

Anyway I think we're just about ready to leave Florida. We could've gone last Saturday but since I felt like staying in bed a few more days I waited for the second group. So we'll leave tomorrow (Wednesday) or Saturday. First to Troy—then

out to California. First to Salinas (near San Francisco) but from there I think we'll move again very shortly. But not far. You see, our whole night fighter group is moving to the coast. But we've completed our primary stage and the primary, basic & advanced have been at different fields. So after we get to Salinas where the group will be we'll be sent to the basic field. I think— Sounds like a nice trip. Although maybe a little cool. We getting equipped with blankets & coats etc. In fact we even got Ann a pair of slacks (her first) to try to keep her legs warm. (Her Dad has promised to throw her out of the house if he sees her in them in Troy.) Not sure of our way yet but we may go thru Shreveport & see Frank. In any case we want to see Grand Canyon & Boulder Dam. Maybe we'll send you some postcards.

Thanks for the income tax form Dad. Is the \$7.97 I think I owe correct? If so their really taking care of us aren't they. That income \$3550 is figured like this:

Base pay	200
<u>Flying pay</u>	<u>100</u>
Quarters allowance	90
Subsistance	<u>42</u>
	<u>\$432</u>

But we don't have to pay tax on our quarters & subsistance allowances. Which makes our years income \$3600 (12 x \$300). But in 1943 we were a first lieutenant for January which makes the total \$50 less. \$3550. Which clears up 1943 neatly I think. But how about 1944. Are the rates the same and if so would you send me a form of estimated 1944 tax so I can make a quarterly return on that in March?

Also I wonder if you would close out my savings account in the U. S Trust Co. & transfer the balance to the checking account in the Paterson National. The savings account is a little too hard to handle from a few thousand miles away. We always seem to be hitting the bottom the the checking account too on all the traveling. So here's a letter if you need it.

Our new address will be 348<sup>TH</sup> NFS Salinas Army Air Base, Salinas, California. We'll arrive there fifteen days from tomorrow or Saturday.

Bye now. love  
Jack

**January 12, 1944**    *{postcard; Albany, GA}*

Wed 1/12/44

This place should look familiar. We're on our way at long  
last Have already driven 325 miles today & plan (or hope) to  
make Troy after eating like pigs

Love  
ANN & JKM.

**January 15, 1944**    *{postcard; Biloxi, MS}*

*{Ann begins:}*

Saturday— Jan. 15<sup>th</sup>

We're leaving here for New Orleans—will be there for  
lunch. Don't you envy us?! Will be in San Antonio Monday

Love,  
Ann

*{Jack adds:}*

On to New Orleans! Writ by hand

Jack.  
(age 18)

**January 18, 1944**    *{postcard; San Antonio, TX}*

*{Jack begins:}*

Tues. Jan 18th

Have just spent a day with Herb & Pat Ritter & saw  
everybody. San Antonio looks beautiful on beautif day. Now  
heading for Albuquerque Santa Fe trail.

Love  
Ann & Jack. & Teddy

*{Ann adds:}*



Hey,

Ann

January 19, 1944 {San Angelo, TX}

{Ann begins:}

Wed. morning

Dear People—

We came here from San Antonio yesterday—hope to get to Albuquerque tonight. The spaces are certainly “wide open” out here—a stretch of 200 or 300 miles is the usual thing! A huge country is this U.S. and the only way you can fully appreciate it is to travel it by car—particularly in the Winter! We had a heater installed in S.A.— Jack tried to keep it a secret from me but I finally discovered it. We almost froze coming from Alabama to Texas—cold, drizzling rain and our car has certain leaks that make you feel you’re completely out-doors. But now travelling is wonderful with our wonderful heater.

Teddy sends his best—

X

{Jack adds:}

Onward, onward—westward we go. Fascinating ride. After Albuquerque we’re planning to run along past the painted desert, Grand Canyon, Boulder Dam plus a lot of miscellaneous petrified forests & national parks & mountains. Saw snow yesterday for the first time since 1941. Got out and let Teddy sniff it and romp in it. He loves it. Even eats it.

Theres not much of it Just a few traces here and there in shady side of hills left from a couple of weeks ago I guess.

Had a good time in San Antonio. Stayed with Herb & Pat. They even let us have their room while they moved into the next apartment (another CIS instructor) who had gone out to a ranch for a couple of days. We just hit San Ant. between classes so we didn’t get to see the boys at work.

Then the other night Herb & Pat had everybody come over—the Kidds, Folans, Robies, Taylors, so we had a good time.

Bye now—wish you could travel like we autocrats.

Love  
Jack

*{Jack writes under Ann's "X" signature:} (ANN. her mark)*

**January 19, 1944**    *{postcard; Clovis, NM}*

*{Ann begins:}*

Wednesday— Jan. 19<sup>th</sup>

We're staying here over night—changed to Mountain Time  
at the N.M. border.

AFM

*{Jack adds:}*

Gad! This is a wide country. Still plenty of extra room left  
for everyone.

JKM

**January 20, 1944**    *{postcard; from Ann to Jack's parents,  
Gallup, NM}*

Friday— Jan. 20<sup>th</sup>.

This reminds us of "Point Clear" where we spent our  
honeymoon. Only we have snow on the rooftops outside our  
windows—a real ski-lodge place. Jack is in Heaven seeing all  
this snow.

Love—  
Ann

**January 21, 1944**    *{Gallup, NM }*

Friday Jan 21st

Hi yo Silver—

We're having a wonderful trip. Yesterday after long ride  
through dull flat Texas landscape we came to mountains. Big  
ones— 7000 ft high. And snow—real live snow. You can see  
big snow capped peaks for miles away. Then you get right in  
between 'em and wander through the valleys. Looks like New

England except the mountains are tremendous and rugged instead of pretty. They're not covered with beautiful pine trees but have scrubby trees or bare entirely.

And then after the mountains down into the big valley where Albuquerque sits. Real tourist place. Then climb up again till you get a tremendous sweep all around the horizon of mountains and these strange chopped off looking hills you see in the movies in wild west pictures. Its all breath taking.

Then we came through miles of Indian country with strange adobe buildings. Amazing how they live.

Naturally to add to the big day right out in the middle of nothing the car broke down—just as it was beginning to get dark. Trouble with the ignition. Luckily a fellow who knew something about it stopped and fixed it up for us so we came into this town of Gallup last night. This El Rancho really has the atmosphere as you can see from this folder.<sup>1</sup>

Got the car fixed this morning now we're set to continue—thru painted deserts & petrified forests etc. You'll be getting a little set of pictures showing pictures of just the way we're going.

Its cold up here. We're about 5-6 thousand feet high and it gets plenty cold at night. Then when the sun comes up it gets warm.

Bye now. Wish you could see all this with us. Remember to keep us well informed of things. Address

348<sup>th</sup> NFS  
Salinas AAB  
Salinas, Cal

Love  
Jack

1 letter includes a folded brochure of El Rancho hotel in Gallup, New Mexico.

**January 22, 1944** {postcard; Grand Canyon, AZ}

Sat. Jan 22

This card doesn't do this Grand Canyon justice— Its the most breath taking thing I can imagine. We having lunch in a beautiful lodge at the town of Grand Canyon

JKM

**January 23, 1944**    {*postcard; Las Vegas, NV*}

Capt John Montmeat  
0-429436 348<sup>TH</sup> NFS  
Salinas AAB Salinas Cal  
Sunday 1/23

Just crossed this amazing dam<sup>1</sup> three times and stayed in the town of Boulder Dam last night. All amazing

Ann & Jack

1    postcard shows Nevada Lookout Point at Boulder Dam.

**March 5, 1944**    {*Fresno, CA*}

Sunday March 5th

Dear folks—

This California is an amazing state. A few hours ago we were in the middle of tremendous mountains deep in glaring white snow. Now we're back in the warm flat San Joaquin valley. Just a few miles to a different world.

We've just came back from Yosemite National Park. One of the most beautiful places you can imagine. Tremendous, sheer cliffs, & waterfalls—although we couldn't see much of the park because it was all blocked with heavy snow. In fact we had to make two attempts to get in. The short way from Fresno was beautiful but when we got to the 4000 ft level the road was blocked. In fact a lot of people were stopped there—some sun bathing, others skiing up the road. So we had to detour around another road—called an all-weather road—which comes right in through a deep valley.

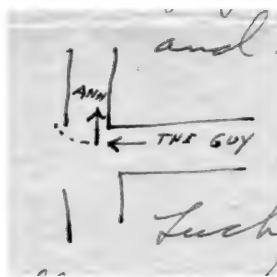
The only thing we really missed seeing was the skiing. They have a wonderful ski spot at a place called Badger Pass—but that's about 25 miles from the lodge and the roads were icy—

and buses wouldn't run until tomorrow. So we didn't see skiing.

You'll have to come out here yourselves and see all these amazing parks—spectacular scenery.

It was a good test hop for our new car. Talk about a beautiful car. It runs like a dream. And really goes far on a gallon too. I think Ann told you about it. It is a 1942 Nash business coupe. It's like a club coupe—room for a seat in back but we just have the place for the seat but no seat. That's where Teddy sits.

Ann had a tough accident. This Fresno is full of crazy drivers. It happened at a blind corner. Ann was almost across when this old guy ran into the back of the car and spun the old Ford around so that Ann headed back just 180°.



Lucky the Ford didn't turn over. Naturally as in all accidents, the fellow who ran into the Ford has no money, no insurance, no job. How is it that it's always people like that who run into you?

Anyway we found it would cost about \$200 to straighten our Ford out again. Back door & fender & running board all bashed in and back wheels knocked crooked. And even then—dream says quote “I love you ‘I love you unquote silly talk we would have a pretty uncertain car. It had 75,000 miles at least. So instead of paying \$2000 to get it fixed (in about two months) we paid \$560 and got us this beautiful new Nash—that is a used 1942 Nash. Couldn't find any brand new cars in this area. And all used cars before 1942 are sky high. But price ceiling held the 1942 car down. The only one who is not happy with it is Teddy. He used to be able to ride on the ledge in back

of the front seat and see the world go by. Now he has to get in back and is too low to see out.

Glad to hear about the nice trip up to Colgate & Buffalo. Looks like a beautiful Inn up there. Bet Richard was glad to see you. I'm glad we saw him in Orlando. We really enjoyed seeing him. You should see Richard and Ann jitterbugging!

We're really beginning to realize we're training for night fighting. Its become a swing shift. We have ground school every afternoon then fly between 1830 and 0400 the next morning. Two nights on—then one night off. It upsets the old routine. Even on nights off I can't seem to get to sleep until late—then can't wake up till late next morning. Its interesting to fly these beautiful planes & use the equipment. Do you know the plane yet? It's a P-70 which is the same as an A-20 with different equipment. You ought to be able to find a picture of an A-20 or if I get a good picture I'll send it. It's a pleasure to fly them—especially after all the time in trainers.

We work in teams—pilot and radar operator. Chase planes all over the valley. (Oh and by the way—we're in the 420<sup>TH</sup> NFS now instead of the 349<sup>TH</sup> NFS. It doesn't make much difference in the mail—the building is right next store). This is the advanced stage of night fighter training. After this month don't know yet to what squadron I'll be assigned.

Trust you got the pictures we sent last time showing our present home. Pine Lake Lodge. Just a room and bath—but it's a beautifully furnished place. Only one hitch—no food. The coffee shop is closed up—the nearest good place to eat is about 3 miles away. But we manage somehow—although with our crazy schedule we usually get only two meals a day and so are usually starved.

Well this seems to be one night I'm falling asleep early. Its only 2300 but after all the snow and fresh air I'm dozing off. Ann's allready asleep. So's Teddy. So me next. Will try to get on the ball and write more often. Wish we could get to N.J. to see you.

Goodnight—love  
Jack

**April 2, 1944** {postcard; Fresno, CA}

Sunday 4/2

We haven't seen any boulevard as pretty as this but we must encourage these local chambers of commerce. Thought you ought to know we're on our way to church on a beautiful Palm Sunday

Proud of us—  
Ann & Jack

**April 4, 1944**    {*Fresno, CA*}

Tuesday April 4th

Dear Dad & Mom—

Seems to me there is a birthday coming up for you, Dad, one of these days. Happy Birthday! Wish I could come up and say it. Seems to me I've been away a long time. Struck me especially today because I just turned in a form for longevity pay.

It was three years ago last month that I got in this army. You get a pay increase of five per cent of base pay each three years of service. I'd just as soon skip any further increases for longevity service. If you see what I mean.

Haven't been doing much these days. We've just had a reorganization and when the army reorganizes it takes a good while to settle back again. We finished our course last week and have been expecting to go to work any day. But until we're reorganized I'm not even sure what I'm going to do. So meanwhile Ann and I have been sleeping, eating, playing a little golf, shopping (bathing trunks) looking for houses or apartments, lying in the sun, sleeping & eating. A very pleasant time. The weather has been beautiful. Maybe this chamber of commerce talk about California is not entirely wrong.

By the way—have you seen the movie—“See Here Private Hargrove.”? If you haven't be sure to do it. We thought it was wonderful.

Good night now—lets hear about things. I'll let you know what our plans are soon as we know them. Finally got a letter off to Frank too. Too bad he can't see Shirley more often. And how do the Rolffs get train reservations to Florida?

Jack.

**May 1, 1944**    {*Fresno, CA*}

Monday May 1st

Hello—

Happy May 1st. Is it as warm in Paterson as it is here today? The sun's just beating down like mad. Feels pretty good cause its been cool up till now.

Whats the idea of Frank pulling this fast one? We didn't have any hint he was planning to leave until we got the card giving his APO address. Didn't he ever say where he expected to go? I suppose he went right out from Florida or he probably would have been able to come right thru Fresno to get to San Francisco. Lets know as soon as you hear from him.

I imagine I'll be shipping out one of these days. I've just been sitting around for the past month. Just after I finished the end of March the Fourth Air Force had a big reorganization—supposed to release all men possible for overseas duty. So this training set-up was changed so I didn't start working with the training at all. Right now I'm theoretically assigned as a flight commander but since there's already plenty of men and not enough work I haven't been doing anything.

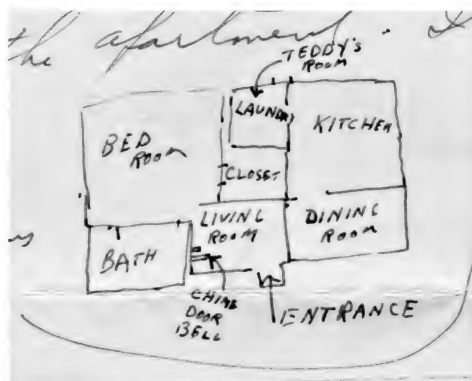
We found a little apartment a couple of weeks ago. Just by sheer luck. We just happened to be driving along and saw a 'For Rent' sign hanging out of a duplex house. It had just been put out before we passed. So we checked it but it was unfurnished. So quick as a flash we called a furniture store that rents furniture and found out we could get some. So we took the apartment, went down town arranged for the furniture, arranged for gas & electricity to be turned on, raided the five & tens for dishes & pots & pans & glasses & then groceries—whipped back and moved in. All within about three hours on a Saturday afternoon. Ann's brother, Oliver, was due over from Camp Roberts<sup>1</sup> so we even had a spaghetti dinner for him. Some service. He by the way left the next week for Fort Benning, Ga.—where he's training as a paratrooper. He was just dying to get back near Alabama.

Also Jimmy Folmar had been over the Thursday before. We suddenly got a call Wednesday night from in Los Angeles.



He'd wrangled some trip to get some parts. So he came up Thursday stayed over night— Friday I flew him ~~up~~ over to Camp Roberts where Oliver was— Friday night he & Oliver took to train to Los Angeles. Saturday Jimmy flew Oliver up to Fresno then went back to Montgomery. Complicated what?

Back to the apartment. It's a very neat place only about three years old, nicely planned & clean.



And the furniture is perfect—including even beautiful curtains. Feels wonderful to have all the room to wander around. Its out in a section of nice new fairly small but beautiful homes—you'd love 'em. And I've never seen people who take so much pride in their homes. They're allways out cutting grass, sprinkling, trimming flowers—its really nice.

So now that we're all settled we'll no doubt be moving any minute.

Our home address by the way is:

106 W. Weldon Ave

Fresno, Cal

And we have a new field address too although I'm in the same place:

Capt JKM

"A" SQDRN. 450<sup>TH</sup> AAF BASE UNIT.

HAMMER FIELD, FRESNO, CAL.

Now I've gotta go & get some summer uniforms cleaned & see if I can get paid. I'm down to my last nickel. Lucky I don't need a stamp for this!

Have you been up to Sussex at all? Any victory gardens?  
Let's hear about things.

Bye now  
Jack

**May 24, 1944** {*Fresno, CA*}

May 24th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Everything happens at once. Here I was all ready to give you one big surprise when I too get surprised.

First how would you like to be grandparents? Naturally we don't know yet whether you'll be grandfathers or grandmothers or both but you're about to become something—right around Christmas. If that isn't a fine thing to do to a poor unsuspecting little thing. Christmas and birthday presents all combined. Isn't it wonderful! And we just heard that the Ritters have a 7lb 7oz baby boy. That's an amazing thought—a small miniature Herbert walking around.

The other surprise naturally is that I'm just about to go overseas. Don't know where naturally but will report to a staging field near San Francisco between the 5th and 8th of June. That doesn't necessarily mean I'm going to the Pacific area cause they send them all over from there. Maybe I'll be right along with Frank somewhere.

Right now we figure Ann will drive to Montgomery (with a couple of other girls) and try to find a little apartment there. She'd be close to her folks and lots of friends and would probably not be too lonesome.

It all feels rough right now but I suppose we've been awfully lucky to have had so long. Now with Frank and me and Ann's brother Oliver (who's just about finishing his paratrooper training and will probably go over soon) we should be able to clean the whole mess up without much delay and get back home.

Imagine me coming home to a junior! Time certainly does fly. I'll bet it feels like no time at all that you became parents and now grandparents! No doubt this baby, though, will be the most beautiful baby there's ever been. It might even be—with

the current trend—quadruplets!

This baby business is amazing. Everybody we knew in Randolph has just had or is about to have ‘em. Taylors—Folans—Ritters—Kidds—Folmars (Oliver and Jimmy)—Robies—and us. Its amazing! Can't wait to see the little brat.

The overseas business was not exactly a suprise—we've expected it right along. I've been assigned temporarily to the training—been flying students in an AT-23 (B-26) or on instruments etc.

We haven't heard from Frank except once just after he got here on the coast. It was a shame he couldn't get to see us while he was near here.

I'm afraid I won't be able to get home to see you before we leave. Once you get into these camps things seem to happen fast.

Sorry—interruption—just had a visit from the Plemons's—maybe she's going along with Ann and she has a little boy. That'll be an interesting trip with three girls—baby and Teddy in our little car!

But more about it all when we get some definite orders. Let's hear how you will enjoy being grandmothers or grandfathers. Are you supriised or have you been expecting such a thing?

Tomorrow we're planning a picnic up at Yosemite. Ann's just whipped up the most delicious fried chicken & potatoe salad. Wish you could join us.

Love,  
Ann & Jack

**May 25, 1944** {postcard; Yosemite National Park, CA}

Thurs May 25

Drove right thru this tree this morning.<sup>1</sup> Now we're staying overnight in a cute little cabin—with wind thru the trees and water running by. Falls are beautiful

Ann & Jack

1 Front of postcard shows car driving through tree. Description on back of postcard reads: “*Wawona*” in the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees, about

*4,000 years old, 227 feet high and 90 feet in circumference at the base, with a hole large enough to permit the widest and highest vehicle to pass through and ample room to spare on either side’.*

**May 30, 1944**    *{small card from Ann to Jack; Fresno, CA}<sup>1</sup>*

Happy Birthday, darling

from  
Honey  
May 30, 1944

1    Written on back of small card, front of which is printed: “Mrs. John Kurt Montmeat”. Card attached to gift for Jack.

**May 30, 1944**    *{small card to Ann; Fresno, CA}<sup>1</sup>*

June 24, 1944

To

the loveliest little dream in the world from her devoted husband.

Love  
Jack

1    A small note-card attached to a gift. Knowing that they would be apart for Jack’s birthday, June 24th, they exchanged gifts early.

**May 31, 1944**    *{Fresno, CA}*

Wednesday May 31

Dear folks—

Just a quick note before I fall asleep. I’ve just been looking at the pictures that came yesterday. They’re wonderful. Why have we had to wait so long, and how long do we have to wait for more.

If that’s still the Brownie—it certainly takes clear pictures. You all look wonderful. I’ve certainly got the best looking family— Mom you in your smart black outfits and your hair looks so smart. And that smart coat of Dads—and then that

beautiful navy uniform. Richard really looks grown up! Isn't that the uniform he got in Orlando? But how about a couple of smiles in the pictures? Things can't be that tough can they?

How about this glamour boy Frank lounging around in the Hawaii (sp) islands? Never thought he was the beach-comber type. We were really pleased to get a letter from him the other day. Maybe I'll be able to see him if I go over that way.

Today they say will be leaving here about June 9th. Course you can't tell from day to day. But we're all ready to leave any minute. We've been working like beavers to get our things packed—Ann doing most of the work—we sent a trunk & suitcase & box off this morning so we can get most of the rest in the car without overloading it too much.

Just got a letter from Troy today. They must have had a big weekend. Wilson just got back from a week in New York. Oliver just finished his paratrooper course at Fort Benning and learned that while he had been out in the jungle he had become the father of a little girl<sup>1</sup>— Jimmy just got a house on the post—at Maxwell and they got Ann's letter about the baby and me going overseas.

So we're not the only ones where things keep changing. Goodnight now—more soon—meanwhile keep us informed.

Love  
Ann & Jack

1 Judith Folmar Songy (b. May 24, 1944).

**June 9, 1944** {postcard; Fresno, CA}

Friday June 9

We're really on the ball this morning Up at 5 A yem—now its 7 and we're on our way to the field. Supposed to get a bus to Hamilton Field near San Francisco and from there? Meanwhile Ann's heading to Bakersfield pick up two chums & then on to Troy via San Antonio & New Orleans.<sup>1</sup> More when I know more

Ann & JKM

1 At this point Ann heads back Troy, Alabama to await the birth of their child. Jack will eventually travel across the country to New York, and eventually to the European theatre. They would be apart for ten months.

**June 9, 1944** {*Hamilton Field, CA*}

Friday June 9

Hello again—

Well well, what do we find here but a new address:

Capt JKM ASN 0429436

AAF

APO 16212 GJ, N.Y. 1

C/o POSTMASTER

New York, N.Y.

That, they say, is a temporary address and does not necessarily mean we're going any particular place but if it does mean we're leaving from N.Y it looks like a big criss-cross between Frank & me doesn't it?

We came up today from Fresno by Greyhound bus. Ann left as soon as we took off, with Teddy—heading for Bakersfield. There she was to meet two friends or rather one friend from Troy (Ala) who had another friend from Georgia who are driving across the country with her. Tonight they should be in Barstow, Cal—at a beautiful place called the Beacon Inn where dream and I stayed on our trip out here. Wish I were with her tonight.

That's the hardest thing in the world to do—leave Ann. After this fool war is over I'm not leaving her for a minute. I don't think we'll ever leave our doorstep and if we do it'll certainly be together or not at all.

We've had a busy week. Everyone's been awfully nice to us in Fresno—about the apartment, furniture, plum, gas, elect, newspaper, etc etc etc. Kept changing the date we were to leave and left everyone including us in a constant state of confusion. But we finally got everything straightened out even leaving the apartment well cleaned up. You should have seen Teddy this morning—just as excited as could be. He knew as well as anyone that something was afoot.

This Hamilton Field is a beautiful spot. For the first time—I've seen a army field on hills—overlooking the bay. Its actually cold up here too—looks like a good sleeping night. The trip up was interesting too. This San Francisco with shipyards, bridges, hills, congestion is just unbelievable—really looks like a war on!

Don't know what to expect next—we probably won't dally here too long—if we do go to or around NY still probably won't be able to get home. Once you reach this stage they keep you pretty well locked up—like Frank going right past us and not being able to see us in Fresno.

More of this as soon as I know more. Meanwhile if you send letters to this address they'll probably follow me around.

Ann's address will be at least temporarily  
c/o Mr M. B. Folmar  
Walnut Street.  
Troy Alabama.

Love  
Jack.

**June 11, 1944**    {*postcard from Ann to Jack's parents;  
Gallup, NM*}

June 11<sup>th</sup>

We're having lunch here today.<sup>1</sup> You remember Jack & I stayed here on the way out—so that makes me even more homesick for him. Talked to him last night— I still can't believe it—

With love.  
Ann

1    front of postcard shows hotel El Rancho in Gallup, New Mexico.

**June 13, 1944**    {*Hamilton Field, CA*}

June 13, 1944

Dear Mom & Dad—

Still right here at ~~Hammer~~ Hamilton Field but don't expect to be here very long. Wanted mostly to tell you not to worry about me if you don't hear from me for a good while. You know we can't communicate without anyone at all once we start moving. Just the way Frank slipped out of sight until he reached his destination. So please don't worry about me.

You knew Ann and Teddy left Fresno last Friday morning. Well Saturday night I got honey on the phone (in fifteen minutes!) at Flagstaff where everything was operating according to schedule.

She picked up her girls at Bakersfield, they spent the first night at Barstow, the second at Flagstaff—apparently without any trouble in getting rooms. I was glad to hear everything went smoothly across the desert. You can't imagine how empty and alone you can be out in that stuff. After Flagstaff there's still a lot of empty space but not quite so bad. She should be in San Angelo tonight I think—and maybe San Antonio tomorrow. From there on the trip is over familiar and fairly civilized territory.

I think you know her Dad's address:

Mr M.B. Folmar

Walnut St

Troy Alabama

She planned to go there first—then try to find a little apartment up in Montgomery.

This Hamilton Field is an on the ball post. Practically everything has run off smoothly—just like a production line. Its good to see that the army gets more efficient as we get closer to action. I've always wondered how we ever won anything after seeing the way some of the fields operate.

Hamilton Field is a beautiful post. The permanent part has buildings much like Maxwell. The officers quarters are beautiful—like those at Maxwell only here they are on top of a ridge that overlooks the flying field, the bay and the country side. And they beautifully landscapped with trees, shrubs etc. A pleasant place to be stationed.

And this San Francisco weather is amazing. Its fairly warm during the day—but nights are freezing cold. I've been in San Francisco two nights—with heavy woolen uniform—and just frozen. Have to use three woolen blankets at night.



You'll have to see San Francisco sometime. It reminds you of New York. Driving in from here is like driving down the Henry Hudson Parkway. Instead of the G. Wash Bridge you have the Golden Gate Bridge—the harbor is just as fascinating as NY's—shipyards, Alcatraz & shipping, army fields etc. And you'll never believe the hills you see in San Francisco. They've got apartments and hotels on hills that you'd swear a car couldn't get up—but they do. They have to park sideways to the curb to keep from rolling down.

Bye now—remember not to worry about me when you don't hear nothing. And don't let it keep you from pouring letters out. The temporary number is good until you get a card with the permanent

Love  
Jack.

**June 16, 1944**    *{postcard from Ann to Jack's parents; San Antonio, TX}*

June 16<sup>th</sup>

Talked to Jack yesterday—he sounds so wonderful. Probably the last conversation. I'm leaving for home Sunday, I think—

With love—  
Ann

**June 19, 1944**    *{postcard from Ann to Jack's parents; New Iberia, LA}*

Monday, June 19<sup>th</sup>

Jack & I stopped here twice before—and it's certainly a haven from the terrific heat-wave down here. Talked to J. in San Antonio Thursday— I suppose the last time for a long time. Will be home Wednesday—

Lots of love—  
Ann

**June 25, 1944** {*New York, NY*}

Sunday June 25th

Dear Mom & Dad—

It was wonderful seeing you this week end. You both looked so good, the house and everything really looked good. I'm really lucky in my choice of parents and family.

If I seemed sort of simple looking with a silly grin all the time please make allowances—I'm always that way I'm so damn much in love with that most wonderful wife. There's never been such a beautiful marriage as dream's and mine. So I always find myself just sort of in a daze from thinking about honey all the time.

And that's why that was such a wonderful birthday present. Thanks again.

Next time Ann's coming with me—and maybe the twins. This is really rough having to be away with all that going on. But maybe it won't last too long. And when its over lets have a big party up in Sussex.

Naturally the Army doesn't tell us much of its plans for us but ~~we~~ I don't imagine we'll stay here too long. So don't worry about me if you don't hear from me for awhile.

Now I'm going to take a quick walk to mail these—then for some much needed sleep.

Love  
Jack

**July 4, 1944** {*v-mail<sup>1</sup>; aboard RMS Mauritania in North Atlantic*}

Tuesday 4 July 44

Dear Mom and Dad—

Just a quick note to let you know your second wandering son is just about to be “somewhere in England”. He certainly does get around doesn't he?

We were lucky to have a smooth, quick crossing—good food, comfortable quarters—nice calm ocean.

Haven't any idea what goes on next I suppose they'll let us in on the secret in good time.

Soon as I can I'll let you know all about it. My address remains the same for awhile anyway.

Love  
Jack.

1 V-mail, short for victory mail, allowed for members of the military stationed abroad to write secure letters home. Originally written on a v-mail form, the letter was then photographed, and the film printed on paper back at home.

**July 9, 1944** {near York and Durham, England}

Sunday 9 July 44

Dear Mom & Dad—

It was just a month ago that I left Ann in Fresno. Seems like years ago. In that month I've gone some six thousand miles and she's gone almost three thousand. Before this is over I think we'll have had plenty of traveling!

I still can't say much about anything. I'm still 'somewhere in England' although not the same somewhere I was last time I wrote. They're really strict about security over here so I can't tell you about the trip or what we see over here.

So far we've been very lucky in traveling. Boat was comfortable—we ate in good style—had good weather all the way. The ocean was just as quiet as could be all the way. I didn't see anyone seasick although there may have been some feeling not too sharp.

Its interesting to see how these embarkations and debarkations work—planned down to the last split second. You can't appreciate all the complications until you get this worm's eye view of it. When you multiply our little bit by millions you can see what a job they must have in Washington.

I haven't arrived at my final destination yet—waiting for orders which may come any minute.

Most of the countryside we've seen doesn't look much different from sections of the U.S. You do see differences in the cities and homes but it isn't much. If we didn't know we had changed countries—we'd hardly guess it from the scenery.

The weather is the most changeable I've ever seen. One minute it'll be fairly warm—the next cold or raining. We wear woolen uniforms all the time—use two or three woolen blankets at night and its still cold. Seems to rain part of each day. When you leave the post they require that you wear or carry a top coat—its not hard to see why.

Had a few hours off last night and went to town. By went I mean walked. They don't provide us with buses—which makes everything very simple. No bother about schedules and waiting.

This town was not very pretty. We found just one fairly respectable 'pub' where we sampled a bitter or mild or beer—I don't know the difference. It's served right a room temperature but wasn't bad. The stores windows were interesting—the drug stores are chemists, hardware stores ironmongers etc. But they did have a F.W. Woolworth 3d & 6d store. I'm getting pretty sharp on this money 3d is 3 pence—about a nickel. At our rate of exchange a pound is worth \$4.035. Then there are 20 shillings to a pound, and 12 pence to a shilling. The money looks like cigar coupons—but its all we use. Its funny to watch the boys trying to figure out change.

We're on a weekly PX ration too. We can get 2 razor blades, a couple of candy bars, 2 packs of chewing gum, life savers, one bar of soap, and seven packs of cigarettes or cigars or pipe tobacco. So you see they take good care of us. Its funny about cigarettes—seems you've just gotta smoke to be a soldier. We've been bombarded with them all the way over—on trains, embarkation, getting off the boat, on train again. All donated by Red Cross or local clubs like Lions or Rotarians. Millions of cigarettes must be given away.

And that Red Cross is really on the ball. Before you get on the boat—there they are with coffee and doughnuts. When you get off the boat and on the train there they are again. That coffee and doughnuts really hit the spot—but even more it just makes you feel good to see those Red Cross ladies—in their blue uniforms even over on this side—

Got a couple of wonderful letters from Honey today—the first since I've been here. She said she's been to the doctor in Montgomery—had a thorough physical examination and he said everything was fine. He's supposed to be a good man too.

He told her she couldn't make any more trips—says he would never have let her drive across the country.

Dad—I got your letter from Malone just the day after I was home. That was a beautiful cocker—maybe more of a show dog than Teddy but not nearly the personality kid.

I really enjoyed those few hours at home. And thanks for the wonderful birthday present. Next time I come home—hope Ann and junior will be along.

Bye now—write.

Love

Jack.

**July 13, 1944**    *{v-mail; England}*

Just a free form they give us. I'll write more later. I'm still 'somewhere in England' although a new 'somewhere'.

Seem to have a nice set-up here—right out in the beautiful English countryside by one of the quaint old villages. Now all I need is a lot of mail!

Love

Jack

**July 23, 1944**    *{England}*

Capt JKM 0429436

425<sup>TH</sup> NFS APO 638

C/o PM New York N.Y.

Sunday July 23rd

Dear Mom & Dad—

Got your letter of June 26th a day or so ago—spent a while following me around the country. Was suprised to hear old Richard isn't going to continue with flying training— After all that pre-pre flight training the Navy gave—they must really have enough pilots. Let me know what he decides to do—and please let me have his address— I can't seem to find it anywhere.

Got a letter from Frank the same day—that had been written June 24th—the day I was home—that's really some traveling too—half way around the world.

This England is all very interesting. If only I could have Ann along I wouldn't mind staying a long while—exploring the whole place.

Did some exploring yesterday. A few of us got a truck and went to a town near here to see an old castle and cathedral. They were built in 1090—at least started then and additions made later. We had a guide take us all through it was beautiful. Walls ten feet thick—great hall with a high ceiling and heavy oak tables—tremendous fire places—old swords & suits of armor and banners about—winding staircases—fine samples of furniture—chapel—portraits. This particular castle was used by the bishops of the cathedral. The castle formed a quadrangle with the cathedral and is now used by a university. Must be a wonderful atmosphere for study.

You can just feel the age of the place—its hard to believe though that it was all old before America was even discovered.

Also we saw a picturesque English town—narrow winding streets, shops and buildings crowded in leaving only about a two-foot sidewalk.

The stores are really cleaned out. I tried to find a present for Ann's birthday but they don't have anything at all. The stores too all look like second hand dry goods stores. No fancy window displays or handsome fronts. There was a familiar sight though, that reminded me of you—an F W Woolworth 3d & 6d.

I suppose you can guess what 3d & 6d means. Me—with my superior understanding of the English monetary system will tell you anyway. That means 3 pence and 6 pence—roughly equivalent to our nickel and dime. You see—there are twelve pence in a shilling, twenty shillings in a pound. A pound is worth (Army exchange) \$4.035. Which makes a shilling \$.20—a pence \$.0167 Course then you've got half crowns, half pence All very confuzin but amazin!

You'd love the little automobiles over here. There's one little black roadster around here I want to send home. A little black two-seater-convertible with great big (comparatively)

long hood—powerful looking job. Just the thing to use for touring around England.

You don't need big cars around here anyway. From the very top of Scotland to southern tip of England is 600 miles—its only 300 miles at the most across. So you never have far to go. And 'petrol' is too expensive anyway. So these little jobs are just what you need on the narrow winding roads.

Bicycles aren't toys over here either. Since not many people can get 'petrol' from cars—bicycles are used instead. They're fine too for short distances. I'm hoping to have one issued to me very soon—most everyone has them but the field had run out of them before I got here.

But somethings got to be done about the driving on the road. I keep seeing visions of head on collisions every time I go around a corner. Just try to imagine forcing yourself to go around a left hand traffic circle—that's what we have right in this little village of ours.

Went to church this morning—we have a little country church—old stone church that's been here five or six hundred years. Nice quiet little place—congregation has been pretty much scattered by the war I suppose—but the few people left carry on bravely. They're mostly farmers from around the countryside I guess. I think you'd enjoy riding through all this.

A lot of the country looks very much the same as we're accustomed but the farmhouses are different. All stone or buck—no wood. They usually have the house and barns all linked together with walls in between so it all forms as sort of court. Some of them are attractive but most look old and crumbling.

Well that's about all for tonight. You can see we're not having too rough a time. The worst thing about the whole business right now is this being away from Ann. Gad I never knew I could miss anyone so much.

And especially at a time like this when me as a prospective father should be right there with her.

Please write to her from time to time—she likes to get you letters— Said you had written about my visit and about taking care of Junior for our next Honeymoon.

What a wonderful day it'll be when this is all over and we can start living again.

By now  
Love  
Jack

July 30, 1944 {*England*}

Still “Somewhere in England”  
Sunday July 30th

Dear Mother & Dad—

Got two welcome letters from you this week—one written July 4th the other July 12th. Lots of news about Richard being home for a long vacation—Herb Ritter calling from New York—Aunt Amelia telling about Atlantic City being jammed—Sussex—and Greenwood Lake with the Travers.

It all sounds wonderful. I can’t wait until this mess is over to come home—and take Ann all around to see everything and everybody.

You know this country around here is very similar to the country in North Jersey. Nice and green rolling country with plenty of fat Jersey cows peacefully going about there business—stone walls and fences.

But the farm houses are different. They don’t seem to have much wood over here so they all have stone houses. Most of them are old and many showing signs of wear. They usually have the house and barns all joined together with a high stone wall which forms a barnyard with the rich fragrant smells that Dad thinks are so healthy.

I’ve spent quite a lot of time walking or riding bicycles along the country roads. You’d like the roads—usually narrow and winding just like many of the Sussex roads except these are paved. They don’t need them very wide anyway—there automobiles are all midget size—not quite so small as the Austins or Crosley’s we’ve seen home—but more the size of the little Willys. They’re mighty cute and very practical over here where ‘petrol’ is expensive and you never have very far to go anyway.

But you don’t see many ~~bicycles~~ automobiles on the road now—just Army trucks and cars. The people all use bicycles.



We're all supposed to have them but I haven't gotten one yet—so I've been doing a lot of walking.

I don't think I told you that we moved into new quarters last week. Really comfortable too. Not luxurious but a big step up from the others we had.

You've probably seen pictures of the Niesan huts<sup>1</sup>—sort of like the top half of a tube. Well we have some of them—also some wooden and wallboard buildings just a little larger. Well, we moved into one of the wooden jobs. Two of us have a large room equipped with a very comfortable spring bed—a stove in the middle of the room—then a tricky little wash stand. There's an idea for the country too. They use a stand with a basin with a whole in bottom and a stopper. Below it is a pail to catch the waste water. You simply get a pitcher of water—put the stopper in the basin—wash—then let the water run into the pail. Very neat and simple. The hot water system is very simple too. You just light a fire in the stove if you can find some paper and wood and coal and heat the water. So far its been simpler to walk down to the so-called officers club (and mess) about a quarter of a mile down the road where they have hot water occasionally and wash & shave there. The old habit of several showers a day has been dispensed with too. Not only does it involve too much preparation but its no fun to take cold showers in a cold room.

And it has been cold here. Cold and rainy. We did have a sunny day this past week—the first one I can remember since we've been here. Then it got warm enough to take-off our leather jackets. I'll bet you'd love to share some of this cold with us—we could use some of that heat and sunshine we read about home.

Can't tell you anything about where we are or what we're doing—that'll have to wait a while.

Our mail system is the biggest gripe at the moment. Seems to go completely snafu for weeks—then all of a sudden lots of it comes in. After getting nothing for over a week—a couple of days ago—ten letters and a post card piled in—your letter and nine wonderful letters from Ann. What a thrill that was. She says she's feeling fine—having a quiet time in Troy and Montgomery. I guess she's beginning to look for baby things. Gad how I'd love to be there with all this going on.

Also got a letter from Frank this week—took just a month to get here.

Well that's about all for now. Please keep me informed of everything—let me know what Richard does and his address too. Seems to me its getting close to your vacation time. Wish I could bring Ann up to Sussex too. Have fun.

Bye now  
Love  
Jack.

*{written in margin:}* Also in the room we each have a bureau, a desk and a little cabinet— So we can finally get our things out of bags!

1 Nissan huts were half-cylindrical steel structures used for military barracks.

**August 2, 1944** *{from Jack's mother to Ann; Paterson, NJ}*

August 2, 1944

Dear Ann,

I want to share with you some of my fondest memories—a few pictures and Jacks first hair-cut.<sup>1</sup> Some day you can compare it to your babies. I hope they give you as much joy and pleasure as it does me to give them to you Ann, whom Jack loves so dearly.

With love and best wishes from  
Mother M

1 letter contains hair from Jack's first haircut wrapped in tissue paper with label reading: "Cut Nov. 25 1917".

**August 10, 1944** *{England}*

Thursday August 10th

Dear Mother & Dad—

Got two letters from you this week—July 18 and July 26th—something must have happened to the 18th one.

Apparently it depends on just the connections they happen to make. But they're coming through in good style now, some of Ann's have been coming through in a week or eight days all the way from Troy.

She told me about the little white sweater you're knitting for Junior—she was really pleased. And she says she's been feeling well—has a tremendous appetite and has gained a couple of pounds. Doctor is well pleased with her. How I'd like to be with her these months and especially around Christmas.

Sounds like you had a good time up in Sussex. Must have really worked to get all those blackberries. How'd the jelly come out?

And what's the story on Richard? What is he planning to do in Iowa? All you told me was that he was going to try something. Better get him on the ball himself to write me about it so I know what's going on. Too bad those pictures of you and Richard in uniform didn't come out.

I had a very interesting weekend just past. Had nothing to do for a couple of days so went for a visit to Edinburgh in Scotland. Really enjoyed it too—it's the first good sized city that I've liked over here. It happened to be an especially crowded weekend because it was their 'Bank Holiday' weekend which is apparently like our Labor Day weekend. Trains, stations and hotels were all jammed.

I couldn't find a hotel room which turned out to be perfectly all right anyway. I stayed at the American Red Cross Service Club which really does a wonderful job. Not only a bed—but they served regular meals plus a snack bar open until 1 AM in the morning. They even had real genuine Coca Colas in bottles—the first I've seen over here. Then the club also has lounges, game rooms, writing rooms—even a large 'Nite Spot' where they had a dance Saturday night for the boys with girls for hostesses even dolled up in long evening dresses.

The town itself is interesting. Everything is centered around one mile-long street Princes St which is lined on one side with good looking shops, hotels and office buildings—Feels almost like walking along Fifth Avenue looking into the shop windows—with those beautiful woolen plaids.

The opposite side of the street is open. From there you can look over a nicely cared for park down a little valley then up

another hill is the tremendous old castle that dominates the city. Around it and for a mile parallel to Princes St is what is called the Old City which reaches right to Holyrood Palace where Mary Queen of Scots spent six years plus a couple of murders—and the Palace is still the royal residence when the King & Queen go to Scotland which isn't often.

I was rather lucky to pick up a good guide. On the train up—which incidentally got me there at about 5 AM—the passenger next to me—an English girl whose husband was in Canada—was to meet her brother at the station. I helped her with her bags and waited with her till brother came. He was a vicar of a London church spending a few weeks in Scotland to give that man a vacation. So it was he who brought me to the Red Cross Service Club after I had learned the hotels were all jammed.

After a few hours sleep I was out again starting to look around and I ran into them again—also sightseeing. So I went along with them through the castle & palace & old city. All very interesting.

Then they invited me to have tea with them at four. That was a new angle. Four of us—vicar, his mother, his sister and I went to what looked to me like a small confectioner's shop. It was only after we had gotten on an elevator and gone up three large floors all filled with people drinking their afternoon tea that I realized that afternoon tea is really here to stay! And it was really good too—with little sandwiches, cakes & jelly. Its just the same as our 'coke' in the afternoon and tea is far more appropriate in this climate.

Then after we finished our 'tea' we took a trolley ride—the city is just filled with double decker trolleys—out to a nearby beach in the 'Firth of Fourth where you remember the German sub sneaked up ~~the river~~ and sank a ship early in the war. The beach was rather dirty and Coney Island looking with a cheap amusement park—a stone walk instead of a boardwalk. But kids seemed to be having a lot of fun wading in the water although it was cold for me even with my woolen uniform.

Well that all took until about eight o'clock—I had just time to get my foot in the eating room at the club before they stopped serving supper. Spent the rest of the evening writing to Ann and walking a little bit more.

Really enjoyed the trip but it tortures me to go anywhere without Honey. If she were here too I wouldn't mind staying for a long while. This is a very fascinating country. Its especially interesting to see the settings for all the books you read—that is the 'literary England.'

Frank had a very clever idea. Ann said she got a carbon copy of a letter he sent me. She thought that was really clever—who but an engineer would think of something efficient like that.

Well that's about all for tonight. I suppose by the time you get this you'll be starting or already on you vacation. Have fun—lie in the sun a bit for me and maybe take a quick swim for me. Maybe it will make you feel cooler to know I use four or five blankets every night.

Bye now—Write  
Love,  
Jack

**August 15, 1944**    *{England}*

Tuesday August 15th

Dear Mother & Dad—

Still here in the same place “somewhere in England” but don't expect to stay here too long. Please excuse the poor paper—things are tough everywhere—you can really notice a paper shortage over here.

I had a wonderful time this past week-end—got to see London for a few hours. Took an officer there on 'business' which so often seems to be best handled on a week-end.

It wasn't far from London so we had about twelve hours to see London—seven of which I spent sleeping. Which left about five hours to see the whole tremendous city. Its something like trying to see all of New York in that time.

The trouble with these English cities is that everything closes officially about 10 PM. That's to get people home before the blackout makes traveling complicated. Its a strange feeling to have it stay bright so long but it doesn't get really dark until after 11 PM. Thats partly because the nights during

summer are only about five or six hours long from about 11 PM until about 5 AM.

Then of course they're on what they call double summer time which means they're clocks are two hours ahead.

We got into London about 9 PM and immediately went to that wonderful American Red Cross Service Club to find beds for the night. Don't know what we'd do without that Red Cross.

The club was much like the one in Edinburgh. They gave you a good bed with luxurious clean sheets for about four shillings (that's \$.80). Then they have a cafeteria that serves meals at regular hours—also a snack bar that stays open almost all the time.

So after getting our beds, we washed up a bit, then walked around Piccadilly Circus for a few hours. That's the part of London that corresponds to New York's Times Square. It's filled with theatres, hotels, bars and stuff and all very crowded with service men. We just wandered all over the place enjoying the big city feeling for a welcome change from our quiet little country village and fields.

Dropped into some of the hotels and bars to see what they were like. They seemed all old and several decades back from what we're used to home but some are really nice—maybe elegant is the word. A few very nice places where they had dinner and orchestras for dancing. Other places were just as crude and rough as many of the dives in N.Y.

The strangest feeling of all is walking around the dark streets after it gets dark and the only lights are little slits from the street lights and on the taxicabs. Those cabs are just exactly like the pictures you've probably seen—look about twenty years old—but there seem to be plenty of them. The cabs and trolleys & buses are the only things you see on the streets—no private cars at all.

After a couple of hours wandering we went back to one of the service clubs for a 'snack' and had some delicious waffles and coffee. This was at a different service club from the one we were staying—there seems to be about a half dozen main clubs and they each use several other buildings around as annexes for beds.

After some sleep—the other officer went back to get his business done while I stayed in town for a few hours sightseeing.

After a quick shower and shave & breakfast I walked over to Whitehall Street along a park that reminded me of Central Park—past a lot of tremendous government buildings then to Westminster Abbey and House of Parliament with the tremendous ‘Big Ben’ & the Thames.

That was a marvelous experience. Went into Westminster—it’s a beautiful old place—just as interesting as can be. Saw all the tombs where the kings and famous ~~names~~ people are buried—saw the place where they hold coronations. There was no service going on at the time—I’d love to have stayed for it but didn’t have time but saw a few of the little chapels where a few people were enjoying their own private prayers.

Then I went over to the Parliament Building but found that was closed so I walked out on the bridge and just looked for awhile. It makes a beautiful picture—that beautiful building with the ‘omight Thames’ flowing to the sea.” You can just feel all the history of the British Empire just seeing the place—almost hear that stately ‘Pomp & Circumstance.’

Well by then my time was about up so I went over the bridge to Waterloo Station for my train. Altogether a wonderful visit—now I’m looking forward to taking Ann over and really seeing it. It drives me mad to see these places without her.

Maybe Ann has written you about the things she’s getting these days for our little prospective family. So far she has a couple of little dresses, blankets & quilts plus of course the five dozen diapers. Now she’s wrangled an old cradle which she says everyone in the family has used—she started in it and thinks her mother did too. She’s planning to fix that up with some fancy ruffles and stuff for our junior. Also Ann’s decided its going to be a girl! And Honey’s been having a few maternity dresses whipped up too. I’d like to see them!

I haven’t heard from Frank recently but I’ll bet he got to see the President while he was in Oahu. And I still haven’t any idea what Richard is doing.

I imagine right now you’re enjoying your vacation up in Sussex—I’d like to join you.

Our countryside around here reminds me very much of the farm and since we've been having beautiful clear—even warm but not hot weather its all very tantalizing. Anyway take a few swims for me and chop up a few logs for me. Before long Dream and I and Junior and Teddy are going to join you up there.

Bye now—lets hear all about things and take good care of yourselves.

Love  
Jack

August 20, 1944 {postcard from Ann to Jack's parents;  
Albany, GA}

Sunday—Aug. 20<sup>th</sup>

Am over here just today—wanted to be back in Jack's old haunts.

Lots of love—  
Ann

August 27, 1944 {France}

Sunday August 27th

Dear Folks—

My how that boy Jack does get around. For here he is somewhere in France. We've been here several days but I've been so busy this is the first chance I've had to tell you about it.

We're at a captured German Field—a big place. We understand it was built originally by the French after the Franco-Prussian War—used by American troops during World War I—then occupied by Germans since they took France.

It must have been a beautiful set-up—nicely organized but they wrecked things pretty much before they left. We're living in a regular barracks building which they failed to demolish and we've managed to salvage all sorts of tables, cabinets, beds & chairs from other wrecked buildings to furnish things pretty comfortably. The roof leaked quite badly but we found plenty



of tar left so we fixed the roof yesterday—had a shower last night which failed to get through but I'm not too sure of it in any long steady rain.

The country around here is really beautiful—much more like home than England. There's not that always damp cold feeling we had there—here the sun is warm and bright, the sky is clear and blue—orchards with green apples, woods, plenty of gardens the Germans thoughtfully provided for us—mostly potatoes which we seem to have every meal. The rest of the meals are almost entirely K or C rations which are those neat package jobs you've probably read about. They have little cans of ham or cheese or both or ham and eggs—energy crackers, little packs of coffee—sugar, chocolate or fruit bar and such. Doesn't taste bad at all but I imagine one might grow a little tired of it after awhile. I've already told Ann that after the war we're going to have a very simple meal system—give all our guests a mess kit or tray—give each a box of K rations and let 'em take care of themselves—then have a couple of barrels of hot water—the first soapy with a brush to clean it off—the second hot for rinsing. To dry you simply let it air—it's so hot it dries itself. No fuss—no bother—no dishwashing. Then later I suppose we can gradually simplify it even more to just a pill!

I haven't been to town yet so haven't had any chance to inflict any French on some poor unsuspecting Frenchman. We'll see if my two years or maybe it was just one—with Mme Crooks in EHS<sup>1</sup> was of any use. The boys who've been in say there seems to be plenty of food around although not much else. Except of course all the wine anyone would want. It's also easy to pick up fresh 'oeufs' from neighboring farms in exchange for some cigarettes or chocolate or sugar.

The worst thing about the moving is the mail situation—They moved our post office out of our place in England a couple of weeks before we left and now they tell us we won't get any here for at least a week. So it'll be three or four miserable weeks altogether with no mail. The last word I had from Ann was written August 5. This is maddening to be cut off from things so completely. But dammit—one day soon there'll be a tremendous pile of letters accumulated.

Well. Bye now—lets know all about everything—how you are & where Richard is—and if Frank is still vacationing in the

Pacific. Hope all this mess is over soon so we can really have some real living again.

Jack.

(PS. Address remains the same  
APO 638)

1 Eastside High School in Paterson, NJ, opened in 1926, Alumni include Hall of Fame baseball player Larry Doby, and poet Allen Ginsberg. The team mascot is the 'ghosts'.

**September 1, 1944** {France}

France

Friday September 1st (I think!)

Dear Mom & Dad—

Mail finally caught up with us the night before last. Just as we were about to have supper a transport came staggering in under the weight of our accumulated mail. You should have seen this camp come to life then—everybody too busy to eat—everyone reading a whole stack of mail—nothing seems so wonderful as mail after being cut off from it for several weeks.

Your letters of August 5<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> and a V-mail of Aug 16<sup>th</sup>. And I got ten wonderful letters from Honey with a lot of pictures and even a little ring. Also a short V-mail from Richard which still didn't make it very clear what's going on whether he's flying or not or when or where.

Ann was just wildly excited about the album you sent her—said she's never received so wonderful a present. She loves all the pictures and the little lock of hair. I'm anxious to see those pictures myself—I don't remember very many of me. Ann says she's decided our Jr's gotta be a boy and look just like those pictures!

I suppose you heard about all the baby stuff she's been getting looks like we're all ready for Jr to come any day. I'd love to see it all and help pick it out—would really be a thrill.

There still isn't much I can tell you about where we are or what we're doing. I still like this French countryside. Got in a 70-mile jeep trip a few days ago so got to see it from the ground. We had a wonderful day—winding through the little

villages where the people all wave and give you the V-sign. It makes you feel like a hero. I can appreciate how they feel after four years of occupation—just about the way I would feel if I could go see Ann right this minute.

We stopped for lunch at a little village restaurant where my companion—our intelligence officer—brought out some pretty smooth French to arrange a good lunch for us. It took her about a half hour to whip it up so we walked down the street a ways to a little sidewalk café where we sat at a little table—drank some red wine and read a French newspaper. Felt like we might have been right in Paris.

Then we went back to our lunch—it was delicious. Soup, tomato salad, veal, delicious French fried potatoes—along with a half bottle of even better red wine. Apparently you can't drink water around here. The whole meal was excellent—these French women know how to handle food.

We enjoyed the whole ride & got our business done—then on the way back stopped at a farm house and managed to pick up two dozen eggs in exchange for some cigarettes, chocolate, matches. They've been making a good breakfast these mornings—you just take them to the mess hall where they whip them up for you.

We're pretty well settled here now—quarters are fixed up well enough to be very pleasant. We've tarred the roof—it held out without a leak during a couple of days rain. We still use our tin helmets for washing & shaving—they're very practical for it. The water is so good and soft that shaving is perfectly painless even in cold water.

About razor blades and gum you mentioned,— I'm pretty well fixed. I brought a supply with me—then the weekly PX ration includes 2 blades a week plus chewing gum—so we've been doing fine. Thanks for thinking of it though. Really it seems more trouble than its worth for packages. They seem to take forever to get here and then they're usually battered beyond recognition. Then when we make a move like we just finished it takes them even longer to catch us.

Its strange to hear about the heat you've been having—we could spare plenty of our cold weather. Its warmer here than it was up in England but its always cool enough for a leather

jacket. And at night we use three or four blankets on top. In fact I've almost forgotten what a hot summer is like.

I suppose by now you're vacation is over. Did you get to Ventnor or go directly to Sussex? How I'd love to have taken Ann up around the farm for a little vacation. If the boys keep moving like they have been—maybe it won't be too long<sup>1</sup>. Except we'll probably return by way of Tokio Dammit.

Bye now—write.  
Love,  
Jack

1 The Allied Army had liberated Paris only a week earlier, on August 25, after four years of German occupation.

**September 10, 1944** {France}

France  
Sunday Sept. 10th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Got your cards from Ventnor and Colesville. Both look mighty good—I'm eagerly looking forward to showing them to Ann. I like Dad's 'X' marking the spot where you and Uncle Kurt fished. You didn't say which of you caught the kingfish.

That talk of canning peaches up in the country is tantalizing. I suppose you also found plenty of apples around. Believe it or not we had apple pie last week. There are plenty of orchards around with apples just going to waste. So the boys picked up a lot of them and make dozens of pies. They've weren't too tasty but they looked the apple pies and that alone was a touch of home. All we needed was a big dish of ice cream along with it. I've almost forgotten what that looks or tastes like. We haven't seen any milk or ice cream since we left the States—in fact since I was home on the 24th of June. Over in our mess in England they tried to make some of the artificial stuff without much luck.

Our meals have actually been suprisingly good. We've managed to get quite a few fresh vegetables like tomatoes, cabbage, onions, beets along with our regular canned stuff and frozen meats. And every now and then we have real fresh eggs.

We've been getting regular French white bread which is good. Then for dessert usually have some canned peaches or prunes or jam. And of course always plenty of good hot GI coffee—we consume that by the gallon.

We've gotten the whole place very comfortable. We have lockers in the rooms—quite a few tables and chairs—even electric lights run from a Diesel engine and generator which usually takes most of the night to get started. Then we have our hot showers—made from a barrel sitting over a fire ~~fr~~ with a pump to draw water through a hose over a limb and down through a nozzle.

We've already had two movies—'Heavenly Body' and 'Two girls and a Sailor'. I had seen the first one but yesterday I really enjoyed the music. That's one thing we miss—we have a couple of small radios around but they're usually not working and when they do the tone is very poor and distorted. They keep us somewhat up on the news but we don't keep nearly as closely informed as you can. In fact it always tickles us to listen to broadcasts—here we are right in France—but they usually take us back to CBS or NBC for the latest news. It's certainly true that the closer you are the less you know what's going on. But it all sounds pretty good doesn't it?

In case you are thinking about Christmas packages—there really isn't much I can use at all. They keep us pretty well supplied with everything we need and anything else is something more to carry around. We even seem to be having an almost daily free ration of cigarettes, little bar of chocolate, razor blade, soap, toothpaste and shaving cream (just one of the toilet articles)—so really there's little I can use over here. Let's hope some miracle intervenes to get us home by then. Although it doesn't seem at all possible right now. Even when Germany folds up it looks like we'll return by way of Tokyo. But maybe that won't take as long as it had seemed not so long ago.

Haven't heard from Ann since a letter written August 23rd so you may know later news than I do. It's miserable just waiting over here when mail doesn't get through. She was fine then and also Ottie (Ann's aunt) wrote and told me Ann was well and prettier and lovelier than Ottie had ever seen her.

Bye now & Write soon

Love  
Jack.

**September 18, 1944**    *{France}*

France  
Monday Sept 18

Dear Mother & Dad—

Sorry its taken so long to get a letter off—we don't seem to do a whole lot but the time goes past like mad.

We're living in tents now—looks like the France of the pictures we've seen of World War I. We have a group of ole farm buildings we use for offices and mess hall and some living quarters. Then we have the dirt roads that turn from dusty to that nice sticky oozy mud we've seen so many pictures of. Its suprising how comfortable the place can be made in a short time. We now even have electricity and hot showers now and then rigged up from a big tank which is heated up by a fire then pumped through a truck through eight shower nozzles—really luxurious.

Even the mess hall is working pretty well now. Set up in what used to be a barn—and the foods being pretty good. Beside the regular C-rations of hash, stew and corned beef we have some fresh vegetables like cabbage, onions, potatoes & tomatoes from gardens around. Now and then we manage to get a couple of fresh eggs and even an orange—maybe you don't think that's a treat! Makes me laugh sometimes to think of the dozens of oranges and grapefruit Ann plied me with in Florida and California—to build me up and keep me from getting colds.

Had a real treat yesterday—visited Gay Paree. Its a wonderful city— I had just time enough to see that I want to come back with Ann for a real visit when things are normal.

Right now Paris is officially off limits for troops. Most hotels have been taken over by the Army and can be used only on official business—which we weren't. And theres no food to be had in restaurants. So the whole place is not at all like Paris should be.

But we could see what a beautiful city it is. Fine streets lined with trees—big sidewalk cafés where you'd love to sit and sip a little wine and watch the crowds go by. Beautiful shops with fascinating displays of perfumes & clothing & jewelry—you'd love to go window shopping. Then fine big buildings and churches, and winding streets—good looking hotels and restaurants.

Its kind of hard to get around much—there's a subway but that runs only during the day. Then they seem to be using a few wagons as buses. But mostly you walk. The Parisians ride bicycles—I've never in my life seen so many bicycles. And just like New York—people always seem to be on the move—don't know where they're going but they never seem to stop.

Even after dark when you can hardly see with the blackout they're still going. It all seems more like home than England did—the people seem more alive and animated.

Right now our biggest troubles are news and mail. Seems the closer we get to the front the less we know of whats going on. Its getting better though—we're getting some radios working now.

Now if they can straighten the mail situation out so we can know what the big news is—whats going on at home—we'll all be happier. There's nothing sader than not hearing from home. Last word I had from Ann was written Aug. 27th—she said the Dr. said she was in fine shape—baby coming fine.

Hope everything's fine with you lets hear soon & often

Love  
Jack

**October 1, 1944**    *{England}*

Somewhere in England  
Sunday October 1st

Dear Mother & Dad—

Yep. I'm back in England again—just for a quick trip to get some work done on the plane. Spent the night before last in that fine Red Cross club in London—then last night here. The plane should be ready this afternoon—think just about in time to go to London tonight. These things so often work out just

that way so that we have another night in a real bed with real showers and real food.

Speaking of food you should see how we've been eating here. This is one of those tremendous American air depots you've probably read about—where they do practically everything to airplanes except build them. They assemble them after they brought over—modify them when necessary and repair any damage. So it's a tremendous place and its been here plenty long enough to be well established.

So you can probably imagine how we're enjoying ourselves eating. After weeks of C rations served from barrels and pans in a mess kit—you can guess how it feels to eat in a place with tablecloths on the table—even waitresses to serve coffee and water etc.

And the food is unbelievable. We just finished a tremendous Sunday dinner of real live steak, mashed potatoes, corn (canned), cole slaw, soup, and pie. Wow was it delicious—needless to say we were the first in line for it.

Which of course was perfectly justifiable—we hadn't eaten for three hours and then all we had was a baked apple and a couple of hot cakes and an egg. Yesterday all we managed to get was some veal or something. So you can see things are mighty tough in the ET.O.!<sup>1</sup>

Also over here we finally got some sleeping bags—its been getting bitter cold at night in our well ventilated tents. All we had was four blankets which have to be strategically deployed both over and under. So even wearing socks and a sweater over my pajamas I was freezing. Now this sleeping bag will save me from having to wear my winter flying equipment to bed.

Right now I'm writing in the lounge of the officers club here at the depot. It's a large room with decorations and murals on the walls and camouflough (sp) on the ceiling that make you completely unaware that its actually in a hanger. There's a bar, comfortable chairs, a stage where the orchestra played last night for the dance.

That dance was a treat too. It felt good just to sit here and watch and listen to that GI rhythm. Drove me almost mad though—it reminded me so much of Saturday night dances at Maxwell & Randolph & Hammer with Ann.



I got your letter the other day just before we left. You know that was the first letter I'd gotten for weeks. Apparently all transportation was requisitioned for supplies for the boys up front—so mail had to wait

So I haven't heard from Ann since a letter written August 27th—over a month ago. But I ran into one of our boys just a few minutes ago who said all the old mail came in last Friday after we had left. That's always the way—you wait for weeks while nothing happens—then you turn your back for just a minute and it all rolls in. So now I imagine there's a tremendous pile of letters waiting for me when I get back. So as soon as I catch up with all the latest poop<sup>2</sup> I'll feel more human again. Its bitter to be cut off from things so completely.

In your letter you told me about the present Ann sent you. Dammit isn't she wonderful—while your negligint son Jack has the memory of a moron.

Today is one of those regular English days—cold with rain from time to time. My nose is all choked up don't know whether its just England or a cold I've picked up. I haven't felt that way at all in France so I'll wait and see what happens when I get back.

Well bye now—hope there'll be mail from you when I get back—then I'll know how your vacation was and be brought up to date on things. Hope this business doesn't drag on too long—there's been far too much of our time wasted allready.

Love  
Jack.

1 European Theatre of Operations.

2 Inside information (slang expression of unknown origin).

**October 12, 1944**    {*France*}

France  
October 12th

Dear Mother & Dad—

Gad. the post office really came through with a crash yesterday—twenty-nine letters in one day. That makes a fine

day of it but I'd just as soon have them come through with one or two a day. Its awful long between these deliveries.

Got two letters from you—Sept. 25th & 27th with the pictures from Ventnor—then another with hurricane pictures.

Everybody looks fine in the pictures. And I like particularly the “Two Girls and a Sailor.”— what’s wrong with the wolves around there. I understood that Atlantic City was just jammed with men being rehabilitated.

Dad—thanks for the poop on the place grandfather came from<sup>1</sup>. I doubt though that I'll get a chance to get there—its pretty far off the beaten path. I'd really like to take a look there. In fact you and Mom had better plan a trip over here after things have settled down. Its really a beautiful country.

Of course you're probably spoiled and had better live for a few months up on the farm to get used to all the ‘inconveniences’ before you come.

From what we've seen—aside from Paris—most places look rather primitive. Naturally everything is old and I suppose especially run down after four years of occupation. But most of it looks like its been run down long before four years ago.

There are many beautiful looking chateaux scattered around and magnificent palaces like Versailles and Fontainbleu—but even they wouldn't be comfortable to live in. So it looks like Paris is the only modern place to stay—and brother they've got it.

Haven't heard directly from old Dick but Frank mentioned that his latest slogan is Victory in 5 Years or we Fight! That sounds exactly like him. Wonder if he'll ever get through with that pre pre pre pre flight business. But no doubt its all pretty good training and he's probably enjoying it.

Frank's letter was marvelous—the boy's really sharp. Said seeing Bob Hope wasnot the only thing he had to do—there was Jack Benny!

And it must be pretty rough to have to sacrifice those hot showers. Too bad he's had so little time with Shirley in their first year. Ann and I were really lucky we were right together travelling all over the country and living in beautiful apartments—just like civilians for about twenty months.

Sounds like you must have your hands full with all your correspondence. You ought to have a secretary. Life certainly

gets complicated with children who keep multiplying all the time—then even grand children start appearing! And now the Stephensons are trying to keep up with you. I'd like to see old Bud.

Speaking of children—that announcement from Pasadena you sent on to me was from Bill Fine announcing a new daughter born in August. I'm sorry I didn't have his address when we drove out there—we went right through Los Angeles—I'd like to have seen them and meet his wife.

Things remain pretty much the same over here. Rain seems to be with us most of the time—a cold drizzle just about enough to keep the mud in good shape. We slog around in our heavy GI shoes, eat like pigs, sleep about twelve hours a day, sit by the fireplace and read or listen to the radio—now and then we see movies.

So we have things pretty easy—worst thing is the maddening feeling of all this time being wasted that could be spent in real living.

I suppose you've heard from Ann—says she gained six pounds last month—the old waist line really changing. And she's made the first step toward step toward our little home by buying a spring & mattress.

Well bye now keep writing—

Love  
Jack

PS. Got a card from Middy but I'm still waiting for Uncle Kurts letter about the fest!

1 Saint Pal de Mons, France. A small village in Haute-Loire department in south-central part of the country. Jean-Marie Montmeat (1838-1930), Jack's grandfather, immigrated to the U.S. in 1867 to work in the silk mills in Paterson, New Jersey. He is the only person with the last name "Montmeat" to immigrate to the U.S. He is buried in Laurel Grove Cemetery in Paterson.

**October 18, 1944** {France}

France  
Wednesday October 18

Dear Mom & Dad—

Your October 6th letter came in the night before last—our mail service has really picked up in the last few days. We really appreciate it these days too.

Sounds wonderful to hear about getting on the streamliner heading to Macy's to meet Dad—right in the basement at the hardware department I'll bet. Boy I'd give anything to be able to take Ann in to New York right now for dinner. That is after I'd had a long hot bath and shave & clean clothes. Gad! There'll come a day!

I had read about Gorden Canfield's trip—can't remember where. Sounded very interesting. Since when have the Canfields lived on 30th St. Thought they used to be old buddies of the Palmer Murphy family in Passaic.

That was a big surprise to hear of Jack McCutchen being married to an English girl. How long has he been in England?

I'll bet by the time you get this letter—old Dick will be right home enjoying another one of his frequent leaves. Looks like he really has the racket. No doubt after leave is up he'll start his pre-flight. Or has he run out of them. And whats this talk of '3-day survival trips'. Speak up old man.

We're really getting a taste of the outdoor life these days. We're camped in a grove of pine trees—which is really fine in good weather. But good weather in France is apparently just something to dream about.

We were lucky to have a couple of clear days to get everything set up well. Then the rains came—and haven't missed a day since. Some days like this morning it was beautiful—then along in the afternoon it gets overcast and soon starts the rain again.

But we're pretty snug in our little tent now—four of us. Have it well staked down so that there's little draft. For floor we're using two layers of heavy tar paper that feel fairly warm on the little feet. Then we have a fine little stove with a long pipe that runs right up the tent pole out through a metal top. And finally yesterday we acquired an electric light.

So its fine here on the cold nights. Our little fire throws out plenty of heat to make the whole tent actually hot and gets rid of that damp feeling. And with the little light we can read or write letters.

So we're leading a regular scout camp life here. Get up early enough for breakfast—(before 8AM) then work around the tent ditching it or staking it down or building up a rustic clothes hanger or sweeping the tent floor—or going out for a log for fire wood. The French countryside is still in beautiful fall colors—looks much like Sussex.

Then we eat like pigs—this outdoor living builds up the old appetite. Our mess is usually pretty good—considering everything has to be fixed up on field equipment in a crowded tent— Just so long as its hot and plentiful we really dig in. You should see us when the rain is pouring down—standing in line—wearing tin helmet liners—GI raincoats—and flying boots. And believe it or not old Jack has switched to winter underwear—long heavy woolen stuff. Feels scratchy but boy! its warm.

Far as news of how the war is going we probably know less of whats going on then you. Seems the closer you get the less you know. We do have a few radios around and pick up the BBC news now and then—and get Stars & Stripes occasionally. But its nothing like your news—no doubt radios are giving out news every few minutes & newspapers screaming out headlines.

I'm curious to hear what that cotton thing for our second anniversary is. That certainly was a wonderful day two years ago. And I hope long before our next anniversary we'll really be living again—this is all such an awful waste.

Bye now—write soon.

Love,  
Jack.

**October 25, 1944**    *{France}*

France October 25th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Before I forget it make a slight change in my address—the APO number is now 141 (instead of 638). Otherwise it remains the same and anything addressed to me at the old number should come along as long as its got 425<sup>TH</sup> NFS. At least it

should come in if any mail gets in. Its been might sporadic—haven't had any at all for about two weeks.

For the last few days I've been living in real style. Instead of that tent I'm living in a real live hotel room. Heat, electric lights, hot & cold running water—bath tub—gad—what luxury. We eat meals not at a mess tent outdoors but in a regular dining room and instead of getting food slung into a mess kit its served to us by a couple of French waiters and waitresses. Its wonderful—even hard to detect the old GI food when its served on silver and china.

Can't say where we are or why but we're really lapping it up while we're here. Nothing like camping out—to make you appreciate these new-fangled gadgets. Even a real soft bed instead of a cot & sleeping bag.

And no mud. Get up in the morning with the room already heated. Wash and shave without having to light a fire then heat water in a helmet to shave with. You can keep shoes and clothes clean by just being on pavement instead of wallowing in the mud.

Tonight I've really been putting the sink to use—washing out all my dirty clothes—they're all hanging in our little wash room now.

Don't think I've told you yet that quite a few of us in the squadron were awarded Air Medals a while ago. That's given after you've been on a certain number of missions. I don't have the actual medal yet but I've seen them—they're very pretty.

Since I haven't gotten any mail for what seems ages and we seldom get much news from home I feel pretty much cut off from the world so I have no smart comments to make on any activities going on.

This whole business is getting drearier all the time—I'd love to see it all over and stop wasting all this valuable time.

Here it is getting closer and closer to December 19th<sup>1</sup> and here I'am thousands of miles away. I suppose Ann has been keeping you informed of all developments and you know much later news than I do.

Bye now—hoping every little thing is fine at home. Please keep writing—the mail will no doubt eventually catch up with us. And let me know what old Dick is up to now.

Love

1 Expected due date of birth.

**November 2, 1944** {*France*}

France  
November 2nd

Dear Mom & Dad—

Your letter written October 10th finally arrived yesterday. I've been away from the squadron on temporary duty for awhile and the mail has taken a long time to get to me. Yesterday five letters came in from Ann—the first word I'd had in quite a while. Maybe there'll be more today. I hope.

Ann told me about the beautiful Cannon pillow cases you sent us for our anniversary and sent the card right along to me. So now I know what that mysterious New York mission for something 'cotton' was. We're really getting all set to do a lot of one of our favorite past times—namely sleeping.

I enjoyed hearing about all the folks. I'd like to see Bill Fine and meet his wife. I wrote him a while ago after you forwarded his announcement but since the letter was addressed to California it'll probably take a long time to catch up with him. But I'm suprised to hear he was in Ridgewood—I understood the Fine's had moved to Washington while Mr Fine was working on some government job. Remember Frank and I met Mr. Fine in New Orleans last November when Ann & I were on our way to Florida and Frank came up from the swamps to meet us.

That New York visit maddens me—I'd like to take Ann in and walk up and down Fifth Avenue. And that little apartment of the Elmers sounds really neat. You couldn't get much closer to things than Park Ave. and 35<sup>th</sup> St. But as you say that would be fine for awhile but would probably drive you crazy to be cooped up like that. And we're certainly not going to raise Teddy to be one of those miserable Park Ave dogs whose only exercise is a walk up and down Park Ave. Did you know that Teddy celebrated his second birthday last month? We figure he's exactly as old as we are. On Christmas 1942 he was just

about ten weeks old. Ann says she feels she should have had a party for him inviting all the neighborhood dogs—but Teddy just doesn't consider himself a dog—he thinks he's a person.

It seems to me its been an awful long time since I've seen the Elmers. I can't picture Janet grown up—she was practically a baby last time I saw her. Too bad Dick wasn't out at the school when she was—they ought to make a good pair. Also enjoyed hearing about Lois—I've probably seen those of the baby if they're in Time—especially if it was the June 19<sup>th</sup> issue. I devoured that in that long cross-country railroad trip back before I dropped in on you.

I like the way you speak of Dad working in Brooklyn—'his first experience there'. I imagine that is an experience. Just trying to find any place there is experience enough for me.

I'm still living in luxury at this hotel I told you about. Still sleeping in a real bed—eating meals in a real dining room with food served by French waiters. Our only small discomfort is that it's getting cold. They had to cut down on the amount of coal for heating and water—so now they're trying to heat it just in the evenings. Since we're away most of the day except for meals that doesn't matter much.

The weather continues poor. Occasionally we see the sun but usually its cold and gray. Its usually hazy and often we get heavy fog and drizzle. Definitely not a pleasant climate at this time of year.

As December comes closer all the time with me some three thousand miles away from Ann I find myself rapidly going crazy. A fine situation when a brand new father-to-be can't be with his little wife when the baby comes.

But I guess there's no use in talking about that—it doesn't help at all. But its maddening to be sitting here so helplessly while this senseless business continues. Wouldn't you think these people would have intelligence enough to quit before their whole country is wrecked?

Well bye now—  
write soon and often.

Love  
Jack

P.S.— Got a new APO number 141 (instead of 638)

J.K.M.



**November 12, 1944**    {*France*}

France  
Sunday November 12th

Dear Mom & Dad—

I've been hoping to get mail one of these days but it doesn't seem to get through. Even after it gets to the squadron it still takes awhile to get to us here—we're still away from the squadron on temporary duty. Still living like kings in our comfortable hotel with real live beds, heat, lights, private wash room with hot water, hot baths, service at meals—all the simple little luxuries we loves.

The weather is rapidly changing my opinion of France. It was beautiful through the summer but its dismal now. Its cold and grey & overcast all the time. Rains or at least drizzles practically every day. Occassionally the sun manages to break through but that's very seldom and doesn't last long. As long as we're living in a hotel everything is comfortable but I don't envy those boys out in foxholes.

I suppose Ann has written you about changing the hospital and doctor. She had planned to go to a Montgomery hospital but when she visited a friend having a baby there a while back she found it a miserable place—crowded and understaffed. So Ann decided to go instead to the Troy hospital which she says is very nice and certainly more convenient. And because its forty miles away from Montgomery her doctor could hardly make it. So a Troy doctor—a son-in-law of Ann's Uncle Emory is going to take over. And since her Dad's fixed up a couple of rooms in the house she should be well taken care of. I had worried about that house—it's a big old place with no heat except fireplaces in each room. When we were there last January I almost froze. But apparently they've fixed up something to keep it warm—so now it looks like we're all set. If only I could be there!

I suppose you are satisfied with the election results. I would like to have seen Tom<sup>1</sup> make it. Seems to me that FDR is just too "slick." I enjoyed reading about the campaign in Time—it did seem to me that Time was definitely plugging for Dewey. The thing I like least about the results is that Truman boy being vice-president. Apparently never had a thought or idea in his

head—just hung on to the machine and did what he was told. And he looks like a fair sample of the compromises and slick tricks FDR pulls to take care of all his squabbling groups like PAC and Kelly & Hague.

But tell me, Dad—what was the story in New Jersey on that new constitution. Whoever handled the soldier ballots for N.J. was really on the ball. I received my ballot months ago and it also included a copy of the entire new proposed constitution also a pamphlet listing the changes made from the old. I didn't spend too much time with it but a rather quick glance it looked sensible. And I understood that it was supposed to clear up all the antiquated clauses under which Hague managed to keep things under control. And I thought it was the result of Edison & Edge both fighting Hague. Now I read the thing was defeated. So I'm puzzled. If there were enough Jerseyites fighting Hague to elect Edison & Edge how is it that they didn't accept the new constitution? How about enlightening me on that.

Haven't heard from Frank or Dick at all for months now—wouldn't doubt that much of the mail doesn't get through. You told me that Uncle Kurt had written me—I've never received that. Ann says her Dad wrote me and I've never gotten that. Also quite a few of Ann's letters haven't gotten through.

So please keep me informed of developments. What's Dick going to do now. I wondered if he couldn't try for Annapolis. But tell him to write me soon and give me his address.

Well that's all for now—its just about time for eating and that's something I never miss. Then I believe we'll have a movie—we usually do on Sunday nights.

Write soon  
Love  
Jack.

P.S. Saw snow fall today—the first I've seen this year.

JKM

1 Thomas E. Dewey, 47th republican governor of New York.

**November 19, 1944**     {*France*}

Tuesday Nov. 19th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Your Oct 27th letter came in a couple of days ago along with a whole mail bag full of packages and letters for my R/O<sup>1</sup> and me. And I'm not exaggerating—it was a whole mail bag—four packages and about thirty letters between us. It was wonderful.

Your letter is certainly full of news—especially about Middy and Orrey<sup>2</sup>— I'm glad to hear it. In fact I'm glad to hear about anyone and everyone getting married—even though I know they can't all be as beautiful as ours. It seems strange for some reason to think of Middy being married—its hard to believe she's really grown up. Maybe her leaving home might even be good for Aunt Amelia and Uncle Kurt—maybe they'll find some new interests. It's tragic isn't it that things should be so abnormal there—that both Aunt Amelia and Uncle Kurt would completely break down when Middy gets married. Just compare that with the way Frank and I were pushed right out of the nest!! Makes you appreciate your own parents doesn't it when they're so wonderful about some of their sons marrying up with some of these Southern gals whom they've known only a few months. If I'd known then how wonderful it was all going to be I wouldn't have waited all that time!

Sometime when Orrey and Middy settle down I wish you'd send me their address—and I can't for the life of me remember Orrey's (and now Middy's) last name.

I'm suprisd to hear that Russell<sup>3</sup> didn't like Savannah—while driving through it it looked like a beautiful old city—you know the kind with great big old trees with Spanish moss hanging from the branches—magnolias & wisteria and all that other stuff that goes with the deep South. Course I suppose if they were doing war work there it was overcrowded and unpleasant.

And I can see that you must keep mighty busy what with all that Red Cross work, trying to keep up that world wide correspondence—and in your spare time gadding about frivolously to Ladies Nights at Ivanhoe.

I still can't ever pin this elusive Dick boy of ours down—you've been telling me every letter that he's about to come home on a twenty day furlough—that he's busy—that he's

about to finish pre-flight—that he's about to begin pre-flight—that he's in—he's out—he's up—he's down—he's flying—he's not going to fly—he's gotta choose something else—he's taking tests—he's been selected—he hasn't been selected—he's in Ohio—he's in Iowa—anyway see what I mean—I'm confused. Please tell that flighty fellow to some day sit down and draw a map showing exactly where he has been, where he is, where he's going and what he plans to do when he gets there!

I'm still on temporary duty here away from the squadron—still living in luxury in the hotel. I'm afraid its going to be rough to leave this sheltered life for mud and cold and all the inconveniences as you say. Its gotten now so that I complain bitterly if the water isn't hot some morning for my shave—or the electricity goes off for a few minutes.

I wanted to ask about one of my packages—I don't know who its from. Of the four packages that came in the other day—three were for me. One from Ann with ~~a pair~~ two pairs of beautiful woolen socks, magazines, writing paper (like I'm writing on). Then there was another package with dates, candy etc from my R/O's mother (which was mailed August 18th and arrived here about Nov. 17th!)

The third package came from New York and had no address or name on it other than mine. In it was a delicious fruit cake—with rum & brandy—really good too although allready eaten up now. The label in the box says "Waldorf Fruit Cake" distributed by Universal Sales Service Associates. Also in the package was a box of hard candies—sour balls and some bars of fine chocolate—both from "Henny Wyle Chocolates"—557 Madison Ave N.Y.

Was this some of your doing or do you know anything about it? I certainly want to thank someone—its all delicious. Please be sure to let me know.

I've gotten letters from Ann up to November 5th so I suppose you are past me on that important news in the making. She says she is starting to feel uncomfortable in most any position—just as you mentioned she would. This is certainly a fine situation my being three thousand miles away with all this going on—a fine helpful father I'm being.

Well bye now—please write often—keep me informed of

everything. I can't wait for that day I can bring Ann and our little Junior to Paterson to have that big reunion. Wow!

Love  
Jack

1 Jack's R/O or radio operator Nathan B. Glazer (1919-2012) of Bloomfield, Connecticut.

2 Amelia "Middy" Mehringer (1918-1998) was Jack's first cousin. The daughter of his uncle on his mother's side, Kurt Mehringer (1886-1961). She married Orrey C. Hills Jr. (1916-2001) in 1944.

3 John Russell Aitken (1906-1985) was Jack's first cousin. The son of his aunt on his father's side, May Montmeat Aitken and her husband James Aitken.

**November 25, 1944**     *{France}*

Saturday Nov. 25th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Got back to the squadron yesterday to find two letters from you and a nice Christmas package. Gad those pajamas are wonderful—just the thing to use with a sleeping bag to say nothing of a real bed ~~and~~ if we find such an item soon. And that cheese and crackers will come in handy right in this room and the coffee we can heat right here on the stove in our room. And I've been hoping for some vaseline hair tonic—can't get any over here and my scalp's rather dry. So thanks again—just exactly the right things and it makes it feel like really Christmas.

The two letters were written Nov. 7th and Nov. 13th so you can see that was quick delivery. Glad to hear old Richard got his twenty days vacation—guess he really enjoyed them after working so hard. I'd like to see him— I'll bet he's really grown up even since I saw him in Florida. Sounds good to hear of being home and going dancing at the Meadowbrook. Its funny about that Meadowbrook place. Practically every one you meet has heard of it although they've never been to it. Having always heard well known orchestras broadcasting from 'Frank Dailey's Meadowbrook on the Newark-Pompton turnpike—Route 23—they all imagine a beautiful fabulous night club out in the country. Its funny when you know how ordinary the

place actually is—shows what advertising can do. But I thought the place was closed because of gasoline rationing—or is it the place he opened in Newark?

Anyway I haven't heard from Dick yet—a lot of letters are missing. I've never yet gotten that letter from Uncle Kurt or many of Anns.

By the way in a letter from Ann—written Nov. 12th she says the doctor let her hear the little baby's heart beat so I guess we really are mothers—or fathers. What a thrill that must have been to actually hear the little thing.

Had another surprise too which you probably know about as you must have given them my address There was a package from Wesley Church with toothpaste, shaving cream, soap, a couple of little pocket books, a little candy and even a little pocket game of chess. Certainly a nice thing to do—and especially including me when they haven't seen me around there for years— I can't even remember the last time I was there. I'll write to thank them myself but if you meet someone please thank them for me.

Oh before I forget it—don't think I've missed that Kleenex you sent—that really comes in handy all the time—with this sniffly nose of mine.

Along that line— I find the squadron is now issuing these sulfadiazne (sp) tablets which are supposed to prevent respiratory diseases. We'll see— I've just started taking them today—you take one a day.

This place we're living now is not bad at all although it's a big let-down from the hotel we've been in. You say that I didn't tell you about that although I thought I did. We were away from the squadron on temporary duty for awhile. We were in a fairly good size city and billeted in a very comfortable hotel. Real live bed with sheets—reading light above it—wash room with big sink & hot & cold running water. We had meals served to us by French waiters in the hotel dining room—so you can see it was all pretty rough.

So now this comes as a shock. We're living in a little town in a building that might have been a private home or small hotel. Its not bad—at least its dry, we have electricity—even a radio right here in the room which someone snagged somewhere.

But I wish you could see the field—beautiful rich mud—the kind you wallow in. Never have I seen mud like they have in France—there seems to be no substance to the earth—gets bottomless—almost like wading. The stuff is so wet that its very thin so it doesn't cake up too much but its really sloppy. After being on pavement for a month it took a lot of coaxing to make my little feet take that first plunge. Actually we're mighty lucky that we don't have to live in it. Its not bad at all when you can come back to the dry room to get warmed up and get dry things on.

Well bye now—thanks again for the nice Christmas present. It means a lot to get them—makes you feel close to home for awhile and you forget about all this god-awful mess over here.

Lets hope its all over soon so we can get back to living again. This being away from Ann these days is the toughest thing I've ever had to face. I never knew you could love anyone so much. It gets worse every day.

Love  
Jack

**December 6, 1944**     *{France}*

Wednesday Dec 6th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Mail has been very dependable these days—that is you can usually depend on it not coming through. They tell us they're concentrating on packages these days and actually they have been dribbling through pretty well. I've gotten several from that wonderful little wife of mine who makes every day Christmas. Even old Teddy sent me a package. And Ottie—Ann's aunt in Troy—sent me some socks and sweater and gloves.

Oh, and don't try to hard to figure that package I asked you about with the fruit cake and candy from New York. Wilson was in New York on a trip a while ago and he sent that to me—it was delicious too.

I got that Forum issue of the Herald-Tribune you sent me—enjoyed it very much—read every word in it. Its good to see things like that—things are scarce over here in the way of

reading matter. Ann has given me subscriptions to Time and New Yorker overseas editions but they're usually late and uncertain in getting here. In that package Wesley Church sent me there was a Paterson Morning Call. It looked strange—its been such a long time since I've read that and I really enjoyed seeing it.

I've eaten the smokey cheese you sent me with the crackers—that comes in very tasty on our late 'snacks'. That goes on around here every night. Quite often I take a walk out to the field along about midnight—that late chow is one of our best meals. We usually have pan cakes or omelette—made with powdered eggs which they fix up very tastily—or french toast.

That makes the third meal of the day you see—because we're really on a swing shift. Usually sleep until almost noon. Then get up, wash, dress, go out to the field for dinner—then our day starts.

The weather is usually poor—if it isn't raining its overcast. The last two days have been exceptions though—the sun's been out. But the mud never dries out—just changes its consistancy from all water to a very slippery treacherous slimy stuff. Luckily our place here in town is dry and we can keep it very comfortable and warm with our little GI stove—we even have coal for it.

The best thing we have is a radio—apparently a German made job captured somewhere—and which somehow we've managed to keep in our room. Stays on most of the afternoon and night with good musical programs put on by the Army or BBC—many of the popular programs like 'Hit Parade'—'Bob Hope'—'Command Performance'—'Duffy's Tavern' etc are put on (recorded) with news and record music in between. So we're very happy with it—it helps pass a lot of our time.

Today I had a special treat—a real hot shower. Had to go about twenty kilometers to get it but that's easy with plenty of Army traffic going by. And it was well worth it to get rid of all the dirt. They have quite a set-up in tents—well heated and electric driven pump to keep the water going.

Got a letter from our Dick—but since it was written before he was home on that twenty-day leave there was not much new. Now I don't know where he is or what he's doing. Let me



know as soon as you can so I can write him. He's certainly covering a lot of miles in all these travels of his.

As it gets closer and closer to Dec 19th the whole situation becomes more maddening—and I won't know for weeks probably what is going on. There doesn't seem to be any way of getting word over here quickly. Mail of course is always uncertain. Cables get through now and then but not much quicker than mail. One other way is through Stars & Stripes (the Army daily newspaper) but that takes just about as long. I've asked Ann to try all methods but its still slow and maddening.

It was just three years ago tomorrow that I was standing on the 9th tee of the golf course at Albany Ga. when we first heard we were in the war. An awful lot of things have happened since then haven't they. Lets hope they settle down very soon so we can start living again.

Well—just finished this in time—our uncertain lights just went off—down to a very dim flashlight now.

Write soon—and lets hope that before long we can all come bounding back home again.

Bye now  
Love  
Jack.

**December 14, 1944**    *{telegram from Ann to Jack; Troy, AL}*

W4138 TROY 23/22 14  
0930

OUR BEAUTIFUL BABY GIRL MARTHA ANNE  
ARRIVED WE ARE FINE SEND LOTS LOVE =  
ANNE MONTMEAT +

**December 18, 1944**    *{France}*

Monday. Dec 18th

Dear Mom & Dad—

I'm gradually settling down after a 48-hour leave in Paris which because of inclement weather stretched into four days. But it was a very welcome change from this routine and this crude living.

The air force and army has set up the plan of leaves for combat crews and soldiers with the help of the Red Cross. It will be sooner or later like the Red Cross clubs in London but things are still being worked out—right now its all so tied up in red tape that you waste half the leave getting your orders straightened out—getting billeted and getting meal tickets. And in a case like ours where weather keeps us grounded after the 48 hours—they don't take care of you at all.

But even so it was a wonderful fun day. Paris is a beautiful city and has really come to life since I saw it last. All the stores are open and have some nice things for sale but at prices that sound like the national debt. No doubt you've read about the prices—how over valued the franc is at the rate of 2¢ per franc.

There's still little or no coal to be had so most of the places are cold. Luckily the Red Cross clubs—at least two of them have some heat and the one I stayed had hot water for baths which has become one of our favorite indoor sports.

I managed to see quite a few of the well known spots—looked through Notre Dame—a tremendous place and very impressive service. We wandered around to several suprisingly good shows and twice I went to the beautiful opera—saw some ballet and 'Boris Godunov'— Beautiful performances—cast and orchestra and the building is magnificent.

Did a lot of window shopping—ate plenty of doughnuts & coffee at the Red Cross club between meals, took many hot baths, dressed up in pinks and blouse for the first time in a long while and in general felt like a human being for awhile. Its amazing how good it feels just to be out of the mud for awhile—ride subways—sit in comfortable chairs, sleep in beds instead of cots—and have meals served to you in regular hotel dining rooms.

When I got back here to the squadron I found stacks of mail waiting—from Ann and yours of Nov. 9th and 27th and Dad's V-mail of the 29th. Really enjoyed hearing all that's going on. You certainly must keep hustling around to keep up all correspondance, take care of Aunt Amelia & Uncle Kurt—oh

and by the way I received an announcement of Middy's marriage to Orrey—and now I know the last name which I couldn't remember—Hills. And glad to hear about that wandering Richard of ours visiting Pratt and getting set to pick up where he left off. Please keep me informed of his activities—he's a hard man to pin down in one spot.

Things around here are still pretty much the same. Still living in our place in town. Next door we've acquired what must have been a beautiful home. Some of the boys are living there now and I may move over one of these days but I hate to leave this crowded room because of this fine radio we have—I've become accustomed to hearing this fine music and programs recorded and sent over. We hear most of the popular programs—Bob Hope, Jimmy Durante, Andre Kostelanetz, Duffy's Tavern (heard Archie just a few minutes ago—he gets better all the time.) And in between programs they keep things rolling with good recorded music. That's a fine thing to have here with us all the time.

Some of the boys are fixing up the downstairs rooms of the 'chateaux' for a lounge and there's even talk of a Christmas party—even inviting some of the little children from the little town. Somehow that Christmas business could just as well be completely omitted this year as far as I'm concerned. All this business is just about as far away from Christmas as I can imagine—so I'd like to skip it. But I have really enjoyed all the wonderful packages—we finished up all that cheese and crackers and coffee in one of our evening snacks. Ann has sent me cookies and socks and a wonderful little sleeveless sweater she knit with her own little hands—socks, books, and toothpaste and soap, shaving cream. Ottie has sent me a couple of packages, Miriam sent me a fruit cake, Wilson sent me cake & candies—even CBS crashed through with a beautiful wallet. So you can see I'm really well taken care of.

This is Dec 18th, one day before the scheduled great event. Now this agonizing waiting really begins. The latest news I have from Ann was written on the 30th of November.

It would certainly be bad enough to be pacing the floor in the hospital—but this is far worse—nothing to do but sit here and wonder what's going on—for days and days.

Well bye now—take care of yourselves and write often.

Love  
Jack

**December 24, 1944**     *{France}*

December 24th  
Christmas Eve (?)

Dear Mother & Dad—

No doubt you will recognize this fine paper—your package arrived in good shape the day before yesterday. My luck continues to hold out on this writing paper—just exactly the time it runs out some new stationary arrives.

The cake is delicious—there's just about one piece left which I will finish tonight and very possibly with some of that hot chocolate with it. The socks look soft and warm just fine for these cold days we are having. And along with that cold weather and my running nose all that scarce Kleenex is a master stroke.

Can't ever seem to keep up with clean handkerchiefs so I can really uses the Kleenex.

Nice to see the picture altho its rather blurred—not like most of those clear jobs that old reliable Brownie takes. I suspect that was one of the pictures taken at Ventnor last August—you both certainly look fine and healthy.

Tonight is Christmas Eve—and I hope the only Christmas Eve I have to spend like this. It even looks like Christmas outside. There is a light covering of snow—altho nothing like the eight inches I read fell in Northern N.J. The moon is bright and its clear and cold. Inside here by our warm fire the radio keeps bringing us 'Silent Night' and all the other beautiful carols. So all the appropriate fixings are here but it doesn't seem the least like Christmas—about as far away from the spirit as I ever hope to see. Its hard to understand that people with the same background of this beautiful time of year—the same customs and music can be so twisted around as to be out killing each other for some completely trivial motives. Hard to understand but only too true. Its especially ironic as we sit here listening to German broadcasts.

Tonight a package came in from Ann—four copies of old (Sept) Life magazines including that special letter to GI's issue. I've been looking at it for the last hour or so—just devouring all the pictures of that magic place 'Home'.

Had an interesting little V-mail from Frank this week written in October. Seems he had to set me straight on a few items like that he does not spend all his time in these swanky hotels or golf courses eating steaks and drinking like a regular islander and eating steaks and seeing Jack Benny or Bob Hope shows—or riding surf boards. Also he says that we now have one island of the Philippines—that leaves only 2999 to go!

I've had no word from or about Ann yet so I'm rapidly losing what little mind I had left. The latest letter I've had was written November 30th. We've had practically no mail coming in these days—now and then a few packages arrive. One boy I know—a Major here—was expecting a baby in December and he got word in the shortest time I've heard of—that was eight days and it was through Star & Stripes the GI daily newspaper. They carry a birth announcement column every day and that seems to be the quickest way to get it through. I've asked Ann to try that as well as cables and letters so maybe before long I'll learn what is going on. Meanwhile I'm just hanging on the ropes—never am I going to have things happen this way again! This is far worse than pacing the hospital corridor.

There's little news I can tell you about. We eat and sleep and fly and write letters and do odd jobs about the place. The days go by quickly but not nearly quickly enough to get this damnable business over and get back to living again.

I wish I could be home tonight with Ann. I'd bring her to 492 E 29 St—we'd set up a huge Christmas tree—electric trains and all the other gadgets and have a wonderful time. Shall we make that next Christmas?

Thanks again for the timely package. I don't feel much like saying Merry Christmas—I think you know what I mean.

Love  
Jack.

**December 27, 1944**    *{to Ann; France}*

Darling darling darling—

Now I know!— Dream and I are the beautiful parents of a proud baby girl or vice versa.

It came in tonight—this telegram of all telegrams ever sent.

Darling Ann I love you so wildly I don't know what to do.

Never expect any sense from me ever again—I'm a brand new father—and I'm married to a beautiful little mother.

Along about 8 PM tonight when I was getting ready to go out to the line to fly there was a telephone call for me from the field. It was the operations officer<sup>1</sup>—he said there was a telegram out there for me.

Naturally having no idea in the world what it could be I screamed for him to open it and read it to me. It took hours for him to get it open then finally he said 'Jack it looks like you're a father.'. Wow! Then he read:

FRANCE  
WEDNESDAY DEC 27th  
"I'M  
A  
GIRL"  
VIA RADIO FRANCE

"Our beautiful baby girl Martha Ann Arrived We Are Fine  
Send Lots Love"

ANN

'Our beautiful baby girl Martha Ann arrived we are fine send  
lots love Ann'

Gad darling—thats too much for a fellow to stand. From then on things are sort of a blur.

One of the boys who was in the room when I came in idiotically yelling 'I'm a Girl' even forced me to take a box of cigars he had to pass around.

After I had spread the big news and seegars around here I went out to the field to get the telegram for myself.

Studied it and studied it trying to figure it out. Had plenty of help from the boys and also a couple of correspondents who happened to be here tonight—they all gave me helpful advice about that 2 AM bottle and how I was missing the joys of fatherhood!

There are so many numbers on the telegram its hard to tell when it was sent. But one of the numbers is 14 and its stamped as received at APO in Paris I presume Dec. 16. So I've figured the wire was sent 0930 on the morning of December 14th—so possibly Martha Ann made her appearance on the night of December 13—14th— Is that right?

Ann darling I thought I loved you to the limit before—but this shatters any previous inkling of what love could ever be. If that was love before I don't know what this is. To think the loveliest creature in the world and I have brought a new beautiful little creature into the world is enough to make a guy explode with wild elation.

And Honey I'm glad Martha Ann is a little girl. Now there'll be two beautiful dreams of mine. And now it will be like having been married to you all my life— I'll be able to see a little Dream growing up just exactly like my own original Dream grew up.

Dream honey I'm waiting breathlessly to hear the whole story. Its so wonderful now to know you are fine and well— now I've got to know every single detail. Please tell me quickly and send me thousands of pictures of you and little Dream.

I'll never get over this Ann darling. I love you like no one has ever loved anyone before. I'll never come down to earth again—not with the most wonderful family in the world.

Until tomorrow Honey  
Love Love Love  
Jack.

1 Captain Morris T. McDonald (1919-1961) from Abilene, Texas, flew 56 missions as a Night Fighter pilot.

**December 27, 1944**    *{to Martha; France}*

France  
December 27, 1944

Dear Martha Ann—

I'm writing this to try to convince myself that you actually exist—that I really do have a brand new little daughter. And I want to practise writing your new name— Martha Ann.

Under any circumstances it would be a strange feeling to become a father, but this all happening by telegram is weird. Traditionally you know, I should be right there pacing the hospital corridor when you arrive.

But even from three thousand miles away and without ever having met you formally— I want you to know I love you and always will.

You've joined the most happily married parents you could possibly have selected and you'll probably find yourself swamped with all the love that overflows.

Please do something for me just as soon as you can get around, Martha Ann. That is have some pictures of you and your beautiful mother made and sent to me so that I can see my new family.

And tell that lovely mother of yours that I love her more than anything in all the world.

(Self consciously)  
Daddy

**December 28, 1944**    *{v-mail; France}*

December 28th

Dear Mother & Dad—

Just wanted to tell you that now I know. You have a brand new little grand-daughter Martha Ann!

The news came in last night by telegram. It reads 'Our beautiful baby girl Martha Ann arrived. We Are Fine Send lots love.' Them were the beautiful words and I'll never get over the thrill of them. It appears from the wire that it must have happened the 13th or 14th and that's all I know.

Hope it's as wonderful to become grand parents as it is to become a father—

Love  
Jack

\*\*\*





Ann's brother Oliver Folmar (left) with Ann and Jack at Pine Lake Lodge, Fresno, California, February 21, 1944.



Jack with Ann's brother Oliver Folmar (right) and Teddy, Fresno, California, April, 1944.



Ann with her brother Jimmy Folmar (with Jack taking the picture) in Fresno, April 1944.



Richard with his mother on Easter in Paterson, April 9, 1944.



Ann at Yosemite National Park, May 1944.



Jack at Yosemite National Park, May 1944.



Jack's mother in Sussex, May 14, 1944.



Jack's father in Sussex, May 14, 1944.



France, September 1944, Jack washing his clothes beside tent.



France 1944, Jack with Nathan Glazer (right), Jack's Radar Operator in the P-61 Black Widow.



Jack (*second from right*) in front of the Northrop P-61 Black Widow, 1944.



Jack with members of the 425<sup>th</sup> Night Fighter Squadron in front of the Northrop P-61 Black Widow, 1944.



Ann with Martha (*at 13 days old*) in Troy, December 24, 1944.







the last time I'd seen Bob. He's working in the NA  
office in Washington. Mary's taking a rest and looking  
to live.

We've been over to Bolling Field several times  
and M.A. seems to love going out. She sits in a high  
flirts with every officer in the place. Nobody can  
so she always attracts admiration and attention. A  
beautifully.

I trust you got my note on the outside of the  
the high chair arrived in good shape and its really  
A few days  
refuses  
ways or  
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strange  
with so  
when the  
both.



## *1945 Letters*

We  
red tape  
days they may break down and give us one. In case  
call me anytime my extension is 4578 at the Pentagon

Let's hear from you soon especially about when  
down to see us. I don't think it would be a bad thing  
as you reserve x pullman seats on an air conditioner  
you up right at the station so there'll be no problem  
end. So how about it. Richard must be almost due  
almost August.

Its now 4 PM and there are a few little jobs  
I rush home so goodbye for now - write soon.



*1945: Jack continued to be stationed in France with the 425<sup>th</sup> Night Fighter Squadron. His last military flight was on January 30.*

*On February 6, Jack was relieved of duty with the 425<sup>th</sup> NFS, to be returned back to the U.S. His last letter from Europe was written on Feb. 26.*

*By March, Jack was back in the U.S., with an administrative assignment in the demobilization program at the Pentagon in Washington D.C.*

*In April, Jack received the Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal.*

*Jack's letters to his parents begin again in late July from Washington D. C. By autumn, Jack was at the Remington Rand Typewriter Factory in Ilion, New York, training in the Tabulating Machines Division.*

*The 1945 chapter contains 21 letters.*

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**January 1, 1945** {v-mail; France}

Dear Mother & Dad—

Its just after midnight on New Years Eve. Big Ben has just brought in the new year— BBC is taking us to special broadcasts from churches hospitals and in a few minutes from the liberated capitals. Somehow its thrilling to hear it all—but gad how it hurts.

Still no mail has come in—the latest letter I have in November 30th So I know nothing about little Martha Ann other than that she has arrived.

Lets hope this is the only New Years we ever have to spend like this—and lets hope this new 1945 brings all we hope for

Happy New Year—

Love  
Jack

**January 7, 1945** {v-mail; France}

Dear Mom & Dad—

These V-mail's are hardly worth all the addressing but just want to say Hello while I'm waiting for news—the big important news about Martha Ann that the APO refuses to bring me—all I have is the telegram.

The latest mail I have from Ann is still November 30th. Four letters came in two days ago but they were written in mid-November. Enjoyed your November 21st letter with those two fine pictures of Dad & Richard in Sussex and account of all your activities—looks like never a dull moment. To top it off—yesterday two V-mails came in from Frank one written Dec 10th all the way from Hawaii!

It continues cold over here—ground is covered with frozen snow and roads are icy. But we stay comfortable and warm here in our little hotel.

Write soon—love  
Jack.

**January 13, 1945** {*France*}

January 13th

Dear Mom & Dad—

The APO finally allowed a few letters to trickle through so yesterday your letter of Dec. 19th arrived. And I finally heard quite a bit about little Martha Ann's arrival—Ann's letter of Dec 17th came.

That's the first news I've had except for the telegram so it was really wonderful to hear about everything. I suppose by now you know more about everything than I do.

Maybe it was a good thing I wasn't around when Martha Ann was born—I'd surely have gone crazy to be standing helplessly by while Ann went through twenty-four hours of that.

I'm glad that part is over and by now Ann must be up and around again—and probably M.A. being so precocious is already walking and talking. Ann tells me she looks just like me. Do you suppose a little girl who looks like me can get along very well—the boys around here say well maybe she'll have a lot of personality!

I'm glad you like the name—it sounds better to me each time I hear it or see it. With those two names I don't see how she can ever miss.

But you didn't say anything about being pleased it was a little girl. Thought you always wanted a girl?

Its all a strange feeling—this becoming a father thousands of miles away like this. I doubt that I'll ever be really convinced until I see the little creature—and I can't wait to do just that.

Over here things are still pretty much the same. Same routine of sleeping, eating and flying.

We're still in the same quarters in this little town and in spite of very cold weather have been keeping very comfortable with the help of our GI stove and even coal which is a lot less work than trying to chop enough wood to keep it going.

Our 'chateau' next door has been really well fixed up now and we have our mess there. Makes it very pleasant eating over there. We have just two meals there. Since we usually sleep till noon we get over there about then for breakfast. Next meal is dinner at 5. Later at night we make sandwiches or something in the kitchen or get some food at the mess hall at the field. So we do very well.

Don't think I've told you about how fine those 'ski' pajamas you sent me are. This room is good and warm when we go to bed but as the fire dies out the room gets bitter cold—and by morning its tough to get out of the sack. But with my beautiful blue pajamas and a pair of socks I stay very snug in my sleeping bag.

And that foot powder is very helpful. Standing out in the snow or in the planes our feet really get cold. The best thing we can do is dry them off thoroughly—powder them with that foot powder—dry socks and they're fine again.

You mentioned that Richard was due home for Christmas—hope he made it. Let me know what he's up to now—he's the hardest fellow to pin down!

Glad to hear about these turkey dinners with Shirley's family.

We too have had several light snow storms and its cold enough so that it doesn't melt. How's Dad keeping all those sidewalks clear without all the old help?

Bye now write soon  
Love  
Jack

**January 16, 1945** {v-mail; France}

Dear Mom & Dad—

Your Dec 27th letter arrived yesterday along with five beautiful letters from Ann telling me all about this wonderful little Martha Ann and including her ridiculous little calling card and two of the tiniest little booties I've ever seen—no feet could possibly ever be put into them.

Also heard about the cute little dress you sent M.A. and the books and powder for Ann—she was really pleased. I'll bet you're almost as anxious to see that little grand daughter of yours as I am.

Glad to hear about Richard getting home and gadding about with Edna bet he enjoyed it. And enjoyed all the news—bet Dad's really freezing way up New York State. Things are about the same around here—everything looks a lot brighter after all the mail comes in after so long.

Love  
Jack

**January 24, 1945** {v-mail; France}

Dear Mother & Dad—

Just a quick note to tell you there's nothing much new over here. We're still living comfortably in our little hotel in town. It snows from time to time so its very pretty around—looks like we ought to be doing some skiing.

Mail delivery is very regular—nothing every day. Except somehow two beautiful from Ann managed to slip through today—one written Dec 21st—the other Christmas Day. Told me all about Ann and Martha Ann coming home from the hospital— M.A. wearing the little cap you knitted. Then all about Christmas Day when so many people came to see M.A. that she really became upset. How I'd love to have been there!



Write soon  
Love  
Jack

January 28, 1945 {France}

Sunday January 28th

Dear Mother & Dad—

Your Christmas card and note came in this afternoon (written Dec 12th!). I like that scene of Rockefeller Plaza with the big Christmas tree—flags and skaters on the rink. That's a pretty sight at Christmas—or any other time for that matter.

You had just gotten the telegram announcing Martha Ann's arrival and you said you were glad to have a little girl in the Montmeat family. Me too—now I have too lovely little ladies waiting for me.

Also got a card and nice note from Shirley—looked strange to see that return address—Mrs FEM—East Orange.

Mail has been awfully scarce for the last couple of months although I've gotten letters from Ann as late as Dec 29th—which already seems like a long time ago.

No doubt you know far more about little Martha Ann than I do—but it sounds like both she and Ann are doing well. I finally learned indirectly—thru my R/O's wife—that M.A. weighed 7lbs 10oz at birth. That sounds about the usual size doesn't it? How much did Frank & Richard & I weigh?

Things are much the same over here. It's been cold and we've been having snow flurries quite often—there's about six inches of powdery snow around—looks very pretty. But it's just going to waste—we don't get to ski or even go sledding.

This Russian drive sounds very interesting. Maybe it won't be too long. And from the reports of the Philippines they're going well over there.<sup>1</sup>

It will be a wonderful day when this fool business is over and we can get back to living again. This war will certainly make us appreciate all the beautiful things we have.

Bye now—write soon  
Jack.

1 The Red Army began its East Prussian Offensive on January 13th, liberating Warsaw on the 17th, and Auschwitz concentration camp on the 27th. In the Phillipines, U.S. forces continue to advance on Manilla, eventually entering the city on February 3rd, and capturing the city on February 28th.

**February 4, 1945** {v-mail; France}

4 FEBRUARY 45

Dear Mom & Dad—

This V-mail delivery seems to be really picking up—your letter of January 12th came in a couple of days ago and you had received mine of January 1st.

Just wanted to tell you things are much the same around here. Its suddenly gotten warmer so all over snow has melted and we're getting back to our beautiful bottomless mud again.

We go on the same dreary routine of sleeping, eating, washing & shaving, eating, sleeping, reading & writing and sleeping.

Naturally its cheering to read & hear about those big Russian advances—maybe this thing won't go on forever.<sup>1</sup>

Sounds like little Martha Ann and Ann are both coming along fine—guess you know more about that than I do.

Bye now  
Love  
Jack

1 On January 31the Red Army crosses the Oder River into Germany and are now less than 50 miles from Berlin.

**February 12, 1945** {v-mail to Ann; Paris, France}

Monday Feb. 12th.

Ann darling—

Progress report as of 20 30 on Feb 12th.

I'm inching toward you darling—at a snails pace but I'm coming.

Tonight I'm in Paree—at the moment in the Lafayette Club. Tomorrow weather permitting—I'll be winging my way to

U.K. There by as yet unknown means to USA and my beautiful Dreams.

I love you wildly and crazily my lovely Ann—can't wait to see you and tell you about it. (In case this should arrive before my other V-mails I'm on my way home! Wow)

Nite Dream.

Love

Jack

**February 12, 1945** {v-mail; Paris, France}

Dear Mom & Dad—

I'm almost on my way home.

Several of us got our orders today—hope to leave here tomorrow—over to England when weather permits—then on to the beautiful U.S.A. when we pick up a ride.

I'm so excited tonight I can't see straight—much less write intelligently—but watch out for me.

Love

Jack.

**February 14, 1945** {London, England}

London

Wednesday Feb 14th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Just a quick note in case you haven't yet gotten my V-mail of several days ago.

I can't think or write about anything but coming home. Don't know how long it will take but as you can see I'm already several hundred miles closer and depending on my luck—I'll soon be home—that wonderful word!

Had an interesting tour of London this morning—then this evening saw 'Blithe Spirit'—the Noel Coward play—very enjoyable.

Early tomorrow we're off for another station where we'll impatiently wait that voyage home.

See you soon.

Jack.

**February 18, 1945** {v-mail; England}

Feb. 18th

Dear Mom & Dad—

Still ‘somewhere in England’ waiting. Its getting more maddening every day—once you start you’d like to keep moving.

But it shouldn’t be too long before I’ll be seeing you and thats going to make up for all this waiting.

There’s practically nothing I can tell you—we’re extremely security conscious again. We sleep and eat these days and that’s just about all—just waiting.

But watch out for me—this can’t go on forever.

Love  
Jack

**February 22, 1945** {v-mail to Ann; England}

Thursday Feb. 22nd  
0815 England

My darling Ann—

Ah loves you this morning more madly than ever—as what morning don’t I

This waiting is getting more infuriating each day. No doubt thousands of men up front would give anything to be loafing peacefully like this—eating, sleeping, reading, movies (last night I saw Mark Twain) and just generally loafing.

But I wants to see Honey—bad. So this waiting is rapidly driving me insane. I read my beautiful letters over again & again—look at my beautiful pictures of you and then dream about you and being home with you. And before long that’s the way it will be too—right, with you & M.A. where I belong

Bye now Honey  
I love you  
Jack

**February 26, 1945** {v-mail; England}

Monday Feb 26th 1030 PM

Dear Mom & Dad—

Don't think I'll ever finish praising these fine American Red Cross clubs. We're over here in another town tonight—just came from a beautiful piano recital all Chopin.

From there we came over here to the R C club for sandwiches, cake & cokes. You can always count on these places they always take wonderful care of us—we always feel at home in a strange town.

Still impatiently waiting to come home shouldn't be too long. So watch out for me.

Hurriedly—bus is coming!

Love, Jack

**April 18, 1945** {typed; from Morris T. McDonald to Jack;  
Germany}

425TH NIGHT FIGHTER SQUADRON

APO 141, U S Army

18 April 1945

Dear Captain Montmeat,

Enclosed herewith is a copy of General Orders awarding you the Oak Leaf Clusters to the Air Medal.

Situation here is about normal as when you left. We have a very nice set up here in Germany, but of course our social life is nil. Other than that there isn't much to tell you.

We would like to know what you are doing now, so write first chance you get and give us the latest gen on yourself

Sincerely Yours

{written:} Morris T. McDonald

{typed:} MORRIS T. MCDONALD

Captain, A.C.

Operations Officer

{written at bottom:} Hi Wizzard Kissard

**July 22, 1945** {typed; Headquarters Army Air Forces;  
Washington, D.C.}

Sunday, July 22

Dear Mom & Dad,

While you no doubt are up in Sussex enjoying a short vacation old Jack is slaving away here in the Pentagon keeping the war going. Which I guess will prove how indispensable he is.

Actually there's no reason why I should be in here today but the department has to have someone her seven days a week so we all have to take a crack at it. I'll have tomorrow off instead so that may be even better cause the stores will be open.

We miss that easy-going life at fields like Maxwell or Randolph. With these regular hours six days a week there's not much time for loafing around golf courses or swimming pools. And of course little (these fingers persist in hitting the wrong keys) Martha Ann takes up some time too.

Wish you could see the little creature now. She's still growing like mad and getting cuter every day. She's just a well-behaved as ever, always happy and bright- the only time she cries is when bed-time rolls around. Looks like she's going to be a night owl. When I come home at night she gets all excited and gives me one of those great big smiles that just break your heart-one of these days she's going to say Da Da.

Ann takes beautiful care of her and that's a full time job. Especially with all the house work and laundry too. That little washing machine is really getting a workout. Not only M.A.'s diapers and all the other towels and pillow cases but even my khaki shirts and trousers. So far we haven't been able to get a laundry to do any stuff, they're not anxious to take new customers. Ann has her eyes on a colored girl who's supposed to come in to help out now and then.

We're really enjoying the little house. We've gotten a rug for the living room (one of these straw or fibre jobs) and a desk (maple) also a little cocktail table. We've acquired four kitchen chairs which are also maple and very cute. All we need now is a spare bed or two for when you come down. We're waiting to hear when that will be and when Richard will be coming through.

So far we haven't had the slightest trouble with heat as you probable well know. Its been raining for the last week or ten days. Yesterday was clear and it got hot in town but it always seems cool out in our little forest. We enjoy sitting out in the backyard.

Saw the Woodfords a week ago Friday. They're living in a room in somebody's apartment in Washington on a very nice street. I drove them out to our little house and we checked up on everyone we ever knew, and had a little buffet supper. We were even polite enough to let Mary and Bob use our two knives and two forks while we ate with spoons. Really enjoyed seeing them- can't even remember the last time I'd seen Bob. He's working in the Navy personnel office in Washington. Mary's taking a rest and looking for a place to live.

We've been over to Bolling Field several times for dinner and M.A. seems to love going out. She sits in a high chair and flirts with every officer in the place. Nobody can resist her so she always attracts admiration and attention. And she behaves beautifully.

I trust you got my note on the outside of the envelope that the high chair arrived in good shape and its really being used. A few days ago the crib arrived and thats a big help although MA refuses to sleep in it in the approved fashion. She must be cross-ways or crowded against the sides or upside down – anyway but the conventional way.

Teddy sleeps downstairs in the kitchen and takes care of any strange noises or other dogs snooping around. I've never seen a place with so many babies and dogs. There's hardly a minute

during the day when there isn't at least one baby crying or one dog barking or both.

We still have no phone in the house, there seems to be even more red tape in getting one than there is in other places. One of these days they may break down and give us one. In case you should want to call me anytime my extension is 4578 at the Pentagon Republic 6700.

Let's hear from you soon especially about when you are coming down to see us. I don't think it would be a bad trip at all as long as you reserve pullman seats on an air conditioned car. We can pick you up right at the station so there'll be no problem at all at this end. So how about it. Richard must be almost due by now seeing its almost August.

Its now 4 PM and there are a few little jobs I want to do before I rush home so goodbye for now – write soon.

Love  
{written:} Jack

**October 14, 1945** {Ilion, NY}

(c/o Mrs Richard Dimock  
44 High Street  
Ilion, N.Y.)

Sunday October 14th

Dear Mom & Dad & Richard—

Don't think you've ever seen this stationary before. My R/O's wife saw this in a store in Syracuse last spring—thought it would be cute for me so gave it to me down in Atlantic City—(you remember Roselyn—she's the culprit)

Its been another busy week—sort of a rat race—up in the morning breakfast—classes till 12:30 lunch—classes till 5PM supper—a little study—bed and repeat. Here's a sample card punched full of little round holes. We're taking each of the machines one by one to learn to operate them and how they



operate. As we go along it becomes more interesting as we check into the applications of the system.

Felt right at home yesterday—went out to the Dimocks summer place on a Lake Canadarago not far from here. The summer season has definitely left from up here—it was really cold out there. They were just completing closing up the place for the winter. The boats, and float were allready out of water. Mrs Dimock brought back about a dozen heads of cabbage from their garden then covered things up with newspapers while Mr Dimock and I and Taffy (the cocker) puttered around fixing a lock and completing some digging he had to finish. The cabin has a familiar wall board look about it—they'd have done most of it themselves. The best feature was a huge picture window that commands a fine view of a long stretch of the lake—and a big wood stove in the living room.

When we got back here Mrs D. whipped up a lot of waffles and sausages & coffee which just hit the spot—we finished up the batter tonight!

Today I had planned to play some golf but the rain that's been with us practically continuously for the past couple of weeks continued. So I went to church—from there over to a suprisingly good turkey dinner. Suprisingly good because usually the food in these places is not very good.

Then this afternoon several of us dropped into a movie—Anchors Aweigh—nice technicolor and some good dances by Gene Kelly, singing by Katherine Grayson & piano playing by Jose Iturbi but there's allways that 'story' you have to sit thru.

All in all a big let down from the wonderful time last weekend. It was really wonderful to be home and see you all.

The trip back was very pleasant. Got into Herkimer right about on schedule at 10PM picked up a cab that brought me and the bags over here in no time at all.

The suits and topcoat and socks and shirts are serving fine felt great to be able to change now and then.

Everything's fine up here except that I miss Ann and M.A. terribly. Don't know what I'll do if I don't see them soon. I've gotten some pictures of M.A.—don't know if Ann has sent some to you—if not I'll send some or maybe suprise you one weekend and deliver them in person.

Naturally I came off without Frank's address and I'd like to write him so will you please send it to me.

Bye now—lets have a report on all activities. I'm anxious to know how that early morning boating last Monday came out!

Love  
Jack

**October 16, 1945** {to Ann; Ilion, NY}

Tuesday October 16th  
10 45 PM.

Darling—

Here's a check for deposit—it came today via Paterson. Let's hope they continue. Pls note the date—it must be an anniversary present from Uncle Sam.

Your beautiful letter written Saturday came today—I loved hearing about the football game in Montgomery—I read about it in the Times last Sunday and I wondered if Honey was there. I too couldn't help thinking of that game we saw with Ruth and Herb just before we were married.

And I can't wait to see my tie—it will be a thrill to wear one that my lovely Dream has picked out for me—the first one except that drab khaki you made me wear for so long!

Speaking of ties I picked up the package at the post office today—you wonderful thing to find all those things. You should see Jack the lounge right now. Took a luxurious bath a while ago—good shampoo—washed out some of my beautiful woolen socks (I have a good pair of stretchers!) then slipped into my glamorous red robe. All I need now is a fireplace some slippers, and Teddy curled up on the floor at my feet—probably a small Scotch and water at a little table at my side to complete the picture. It feels perfect to lounge in style like this. Then two neat white shirts—and flannels which I'll wear at the first opportunity—and all the other underwear & sweaters & ties. Thank you loveliest of all creatures.

You can already see its been a big day. To top it off—I found a pair of shoes. Making the rounds for a second time found a pair almost just what I wanted. Wore them for a while tonight and they seem very comfortable. I can still use that pair that I left in the car though. It seems to be wet underfoot most

of the time up here and I can use them to knock around. Also dream if you get a chance will you make inquiries about how to get ration stamps?

Weather has been much better today—a real fall day windy and brisk—sun out at times other times clouded. Maybe its best for it to keep raining because tonight I got a glimpse of a beautiful almost half moon and you know perfectly well I can't stand much of that.

Mom's letter said I had a Christmas present from CBS—and also she (I think) has a present for us—for our anniversary. When I was there the weekend before last she mentioned that she had been trying to find the appropriate thing (in leather) for our third anniversary. She said Dad was up in some little town near Buffalo so maybe I'll get to see him this weekend—although Buffalo's a long way from here.

Tomorrow being Wednesday we of course must have some tests to see if we're learning anything. The further we go along the more complicated (and interesting) it all gets. We continued today to learn some new tricks about the sorter—its really a fascinating—I'd like to demonstrate it to you. Won't you drop in—course we might even talk of other things beside the sorter.

Then tomorrow night we're all going over to the Palmer House for some delicious (I hope) steak. You fiend—you could share that too with mabe a bit of Scotch first if only you'd come up for a demonstration!

Ann Honey I've been reading your beautiful letter over and over. Its wonderful to hear about everything you and M.A. do. Glad you got new car licence & drivers licence—tell me more about the car—what's happened to the knock and how is the oil holding out. And how are chances for a new tire?

I really enjoyed your account of M.A. & Judy and you & Ruth pulling them apart—and how M.A. doesn't let herself get pushed around. And you luscious thing and your nightmares about having a baby! I loved the remark that you can be sure that Ann Kidd's & Ruth's babies were definitely not planned! And Honey feeling so smug that she's not having one. Gad I love you more than ever darling—maybe we'd better have only one child to bless our union.

I think you're right. Even with just M.A. I hardly ever get to see you. I guess I'm too selfish about you—I want all the time in the world to spend with you and M.A.

I love you especially much tonight, darling. Probably because I'm so pleased to think you're in that perfect Montgomery—with time to bask in the sun and even go to a movie now and then—or to church to hear Dr Foote.

But even in an idyllic situation like that can't go on very long—your husband needs you too much for that and I've got to see you soon to kiss you and hold you and tell you how madly I love you. It just makes me glow to think about this perfect marriage of ours—this perfect Dream that married up with me to make all this bliss possible.

Goodnight now my lovely Ann—I'm about to join you in that dreamland where we seem to spend so much time. Maybe I'll wake up screaming thinking I'm about to have a baby!

I love you darling, more than ever.  
J.

**October 17, 1945** {*postcard; from Jack's father to Ann; Buffalo, NY*}

10/17/45.

Dear Ann:

I am up here for a few days. Wish I could see you, Jack and sweet Martha Ann.

Dad Montmeat.

**October 24, 1945** {*Ilion, NY*}

Wednesday Oct. 24th

Dear Mom & Dad & Richard—

Got your Sunday letter yesterday with Frank's address so I'll write him tomorrow. With all the articles in the paper about returning men from the Pacific he's bound to be coming home soon.

You must have had the same weather we had from the weekend cause it was really warm and sunny up here. We're probably a little further along in the fall colors—trees seem to have passed their peak already. I went for a ride with the

Dimocks to Clinton (not far from Utica which we went thru) to see some relatives of theirs and also a dog show of cocker spaniels—a bunch of cute little fellows. I think I told you the Dimocks have a cocker too—looks much like Teddy except he’s much bigger and heavier. He acts just as ridiculously as Teddy too.

I had hoped to come down and see you this weekend but I’m sort of taking care of the house by myself as the Dimocks left tonight for a visit in Chicago—and I promised to pick them up in Utica next Sunday afternoon. Also Taffy (the cocker) is spending a couple of days at a kennel—I’ll probably get him out of hock on Saturday. I would like to have taken care of him these few days but it would be hard to do because I’m away from the house from 8AM till after 5PM.

So with all my responsibilities I guess I’d better stay here this weekend—maybe see you the following.

We’re working hard these days—this is really fascinating business. We’re taking one machine at a time—first week the punch—second the sorter—now the tabulator. Never have I seen such an intricate or ingenious machine as this—its just like a mechanical brain. You put cards in the bottom and out at the top comes practically any type of report you want. All you have to know is how to make it do what you want it to do. Thats what we’re trying to learn this week—we’re at the moment getting some amazing results!

You’ve probably heard all about how fast M.A. is growing up—how smart she is—and all about her new “stroller”. Its hard to believe that she can be out playing in her play pen in the sun so warm that she has to watch out for blistering. But thats what Ann says she’s doing. Its hard to imagine weather like that—its cold and drizzly here most of the time—I’m really glad (sometimes) that Ann & M.A. are able to enjoy that sun. But I miss them terribly.

I gather that Mayville is somewhere near Buffalo so that Dad is even further from here than he was last weekend. Maybe he’ll work his way a little closer so I can get to see him up here. Wish he’d come to Ilion I’d like to demonstrate our tabulating equipment!

Bye now—lets hear from you.  
Love

Jack.

P.S I trust Richard has gotten to NY to inspect the fleet. I'd like to see that aerial show!

**November 27, 1945** {Ilion, NY}

Wednesday Nov. 27th

Dear Mom & Dad & Richard—

That certainly is wonderful news about Frank. If he says there's a possibility of his being on the way by Christmas I'll bet there's a good ~~possibil~~ probability of it—he's pretty cautious about saying something like that. That would be a fine Christmas present.

Sorry I missed that turkey last Thursday— I'll bet it was delicious. We had as good a party as could be expected up here—about sixty of us had dinner over at the Prospect Hotel in Herkimer. I also enjoyed helping the Dimocks finish their turkey on Sunday.

We've had several snow falls up here but nothing to amount to anything yet—it melts in a day or so. It gives us a little variety from the usual rain though.

Meanwhile with just over three weeks to go we're working like mad to finish up all the things we're trying to cover. Tried to put in a whole cost accounting course in about four days last week—then two days learning card design. I can well understand why this business requires a bare minimum of seven months training.

We won't know for a couple of weeks yet about where we will be assigned. As I told you I requested New York or Newark so I'm hoping for assignment there rather than Washington. So please keep a sharp eye open for any apartment or small house you may hear of. I can't stand any more of this living without Ann & Martha Ann. What is the story on the Elmwood apartment development?

About coming home—if present plans hold we'll leave here on Friday noon Dec 21st. My plane reservations are for 7AM Saturday (Dec 22nd) morning. So I'll very likely see you Friday night.

This weekend—or rather Saturday I’m going to run over to Syracuse (its only about an hour away) to see Nate & Roselyn Glazer. That leaves the 8th & 15th of Dec. unaccounted for—so maybe I can slip down one of those weekends unless this work continues at this same mad pace. That requires the whole weekend for work, rest, and recuperation for the following week.

I liked the idea of the service star and Welcome Home business last Saturday—who’s fine Italian hand do I detect in that episode?

Bye for now—love  
Jack.

Pls excuse paper shortage!

**December 11, 1945**    *{telegram to Martha; Ilion, NY}*

QZC 648 ILION, N.Y.  
Miss Martha Ann Montmeat  
201 Norman Bridge Rd.

BET YOU ARE THE CUTEST LITTLE ONE YEAR OLD  
BABY THERE HAS EVER BEEN. SO CUTE THAT I AM  
GOING TO HAVE TO COME DOWN AND SEE YOU.  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY FROM,

DADA

\*\*\*



Jack's mother with Martha in Paterson, May 1945.



Ann with Martha in Arlington, Virginia, August 7, 1945.





Ann and Jack with Martha (9 ½ months) in Arlington, September 1945.



Ann's father Marshall Bibb Folmar with Martha in Montgomery, December 1945.



*Epilogue:*

*A letter to Jack from 1946, from Brigadier General William E. Hall:*

**January 21, 1946** {*typed: from Brigadier General, U.S. Army to Jack; Headquarters, Army Air Forces, Washington, D.C.*}

JAN 21 1946  
Captain John K. Montmeat  
492 East 29th Street  
Paterson, New Jersey

Dear Captain Montmeat:

In the four years during which you were an active member of the Army Air Forces you made a valued contribution to our mission and the Commanding General desires that I express to you his appreciation of your assistance during the war.

Your efficient service overseas as an instructor and pilot aided considerably in the successful accomplishment of many important objectives. Upon your return to the States, you were given an administrative assignment in this Headquarters where you exhibited excellent capabilities. Your attitude was always characterized by a keen desire to learn and your devotion to duties was exemplary. The sound judgment displayed by you was a constant source of satisfaction to those with whom you came in contact.

While it was not possible for General Arnold to thank you personally, this letter is to inform you of his thanks for a job well done and to wish you continued success throughout the coming years.

Very sincerely,  
{*written:*} William E. Hall  
{*typed:*} WILLIAM E. HALL  
Brigadier General, U.S. Army  
Deputy AC/AS-1



Late 1940's: (l to r) Ann and Jack; Shirley Rohlf's Montmeat and Frank; Phyllis Nelson Montmeat and Richard.



Jack with Martha in Sussex, c.1946.



Ann and Jack with Martha, Thanksgiving 1947.



Ann, Jack, and Teddy at family farm in Sussex, New Jersey, 1948.



Richard and Phyllis' wedding, 1948.



Jack, Frank, and Richard at Richard and Phyllis' wedding, 1948

### **Life after the War in Radburn, NJ and Wayne, PA**

*Ann and Jack's son, John Kurt Montmeat Jr., known as Jay, was born July 15, 1949 in Paterson. By 1950, the family was living in Radburn, New Jersey with Jack working for This Week Magazine in New York City. The family moved to Wayne, Pennsylvania in 1955, as Jack took a position with Curtis Publishing Company in Philadelphia as Presentation Manager for their Holiday travel magazine.*



Ann and Jack with daughter Martha and son John Kurt Montmeat Jr. (known as Jay), Easter 1950, Radburn, New Jersey.





Ann with Jay in Radburn, February 1950.



Frank Emil Montmeat with Jay.



Jay, c. 1953.



Jay and Martha in Radburn, 1954.



(l to r) Martha, Elizabeth “Betty” Folmar Cork, and Jay (with Hansel and Gretel guides in back) at Gingerbread Castle, Hamburg, New Jersey, July 3, 1954.



Martha and Jay at American Museum of Natural History, New York, c.1955.



Martha at 312 Windsor Ave., Wayne, Pennsylvania, 1950's.



Jack and Martha at home in Wayne, January 1958.



Jack, 1968.

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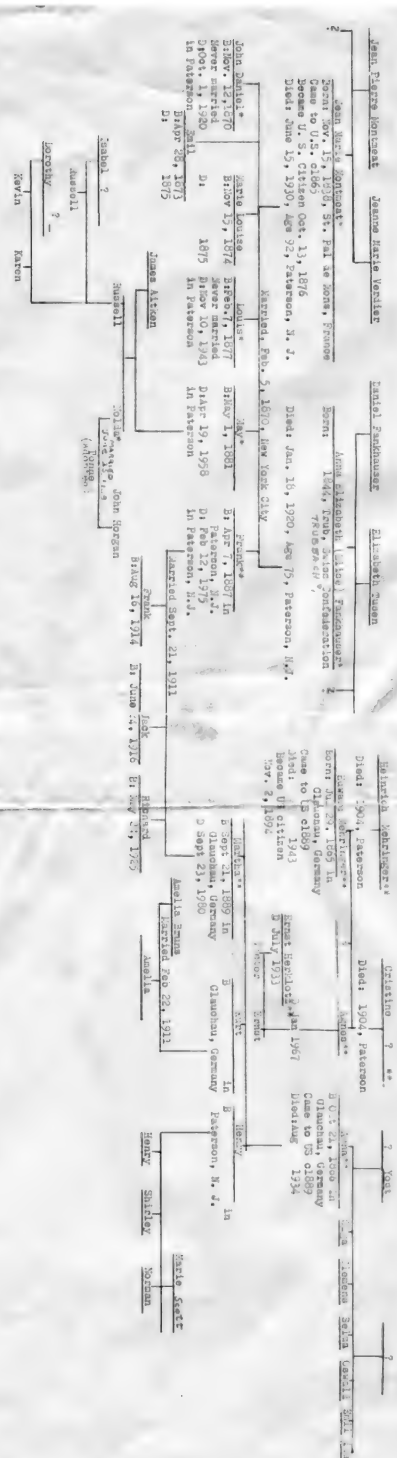


# Appendix



Montmeat family photograph, c.1880. Jean-Marie Montmeat (1838-1930) and wife Anna Elizabeth "Elise" Fankhauser Montmeat (1844-1920), with sons John Daniel (1870-1920) (*left*), and Louis (1877-1943) (*right*).

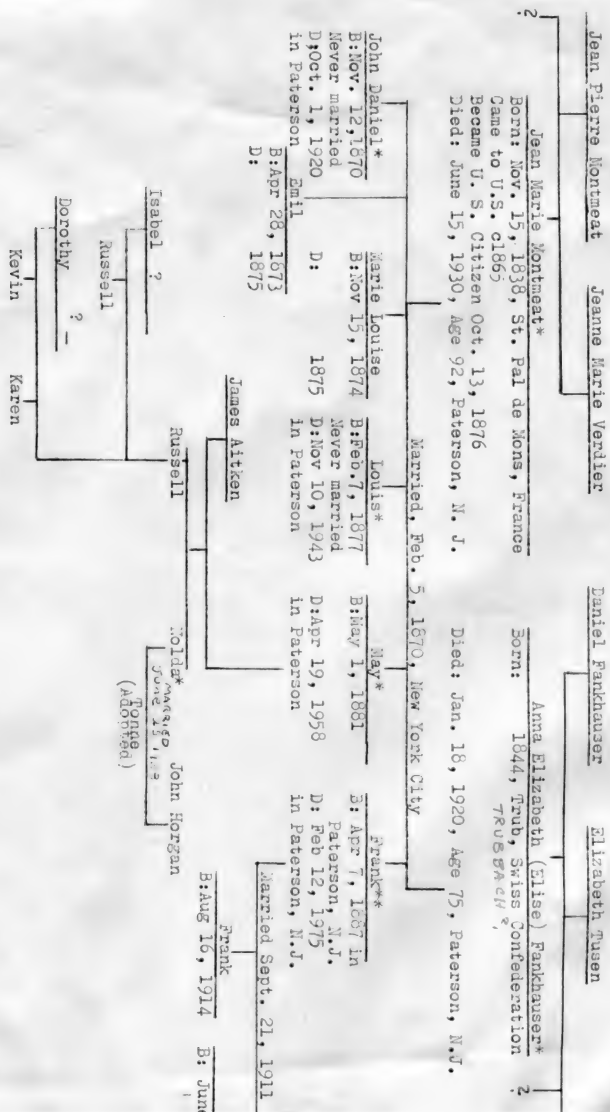




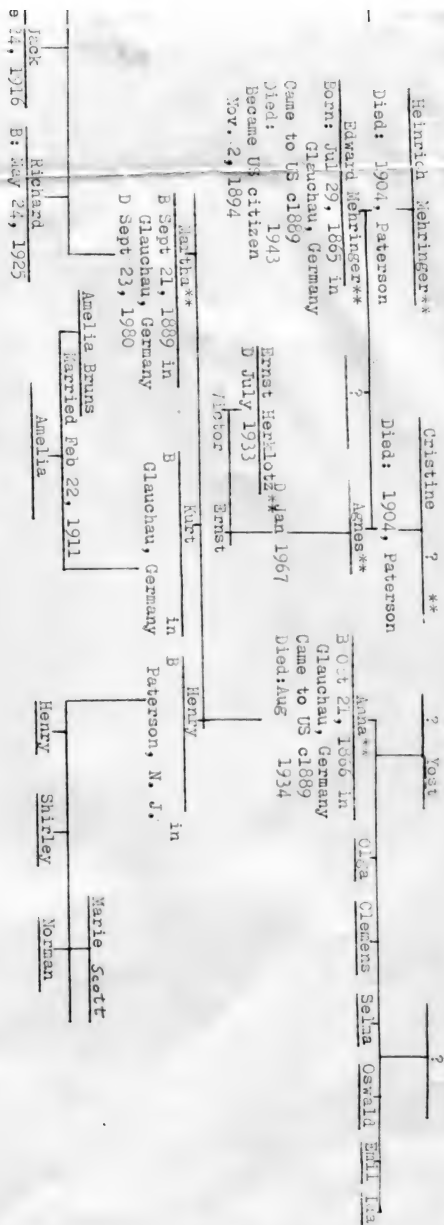
\* Buried, Laurel Grove Cemetery, Paterson, N. J. in "Montmeat" plot.

\*\* Buried, Laurel Grove Cemetery, Paterson, N.J. in "Mehninger-Mehninger" plot, lot 164 section 4

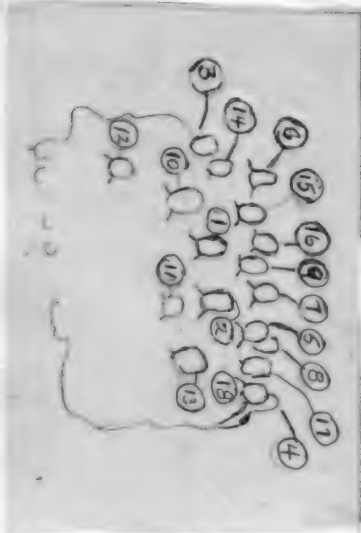
Montmeat and Mehninger family tree beginning in 19th century. (Close-ups of left and right sides on following pages. Editorial note: Since the creation of this family tree, it was discovered Jean-Marie Montmeat had an older sister named Antoinette (1832-1911), who married Jean-Baptiste Faure in France. Many descendants of Antoinette Montmeat in the Faure family live in France today).



\* Buried, Laurel Grove Cemetery, Paterson, N. J.  
 in "Montmeat" plot.



\*\* Buried, Laurel Grove Cemetery, Paterson, N.J.  
in "Mehninger-Herklotz" plot, Lot 16½ Section 4



- ① MARTHA ANNA MEHRINGER MONTMEAT (BRIDE)
- ② FRANK EMIL MONTMEAT (GROOM)
- ③ ANNA YOST MEHRINGER (MOTHER OF BRIDE)
- ④ EDWARD MEHRINGER (FATHER OF BRIDE)
- ⑤ ELISE (ELIZABETH) FANKHAUSER MONTMEAT (MOTHER OF GROOM)
- ⑥ JEAN MARIE MONTMEAT (FATHER OF GROOM)
- ⑦ KURT MEHRINGER (BROTHER OF BRIDE)
- ⑧ AMELIA BRUNS MEHRINGER (WIFE OF KURT)
- ⑨ MAY MONTMEAT AITKEN (SISTER OF GROOM)
- ⑩ JAMES AITKEN (HUSBAND OF MAY)
- ⑪ NOLDA AITKEN (DAUGHTER OF MAY + JAMES)
- ⑫ RUSSELL AITKEN (SON OF MAY + JAMES)
- ⑬ JOHN MONTMEAT (BROTHER OF GROOM)
- ⑭ AGNES MEHRINGER HERKLOTZ (AUNT OF BRIDE)
- ⑮ SARAH MEIER (FRIEND OF BRIDE)



Jean-Marie Montmeat in French 5th Infantry Regiment, c. 1860. (*preceding page: Montmeat family diagram of Montmeat/Mehringner wedding 1911*).



Yost family c. 1899 in Germany, Martha Anna Mehrlinger's mother Anna Yost Mehrlinger (*standing third from left*).

*[Additional information about preceding Yost family 1899 photograph:  
Standing row of siblings (l to r): Ida, Emil, Anna, Oswald, Selma, Clemens,  
Olga. Seated: Jack, Frank and Richard's great-grandparents (names not  
known).]*



Mehringer family c. 1891. Edward and Anna with children Kurt and Martha.



Mehringer family c.1907. Sons Henry (left) and Kurt (right) standing. Martha seated (center) between parents Anna and Edward.





Heinrich and Christine Mehringer c. 1890. Parents of Edward Mehringer. Frank, Jack, and Richard's great-grandparents.



Antoinette Montmeat Faure (1832-1911) (sister of Jean-Marie Montmeat) c. 1895, with her second husband Antoine Roche and his son in France. *Antoinette and Jean-Marie had five additional siblings: Marie Julie (b.1830), Marie Marguerite (b.1834), Jean-Claude (b.1836), Marie Virginie (b.1841), and Jean-Louis (b.1843). (photo courtesy of Lionel Faure, Antoinette Montmeat's great-great-great grandson).*




Photomontage by Richard Montmeat to feature Shirley Mehninger Congdon (1923-2011), Frank, Jack, and Richard's first cousin.



Undated photo c. early 1940's (l to r): Edward Mehringer, Kurt Mehringer, Amelia E. Bruns Mehringer, Orrey C. Hills Jr., Amelia "Middy" Mehringer Hills, Frank Montmeat, Martha Mehringer Montmeat.

SE 1059		UNITED STATES AIR CORPS	
Age 25 Wt 160		This is to certify	
Hgt 5 ft 11 in.		John K. Montmeat has been	
Color Hair Brown	0000035	appointed 2nd Lt. in the	
Color Eyes Blue		AIR CORPS RESERVE	
Date of Issue OCT 31 1941		of the	
Card not official without Air Corps Seal		ARMY OF THE UNITED STATES	
Signature <i>John K. Montmeat</i>		for period of five years	
Name Typed John K. Montmeat		commencing	
Rank 2nd Lt. Air Corps Res.		SE 1059	
		October 31, 1941	
AIR CORPS RESERVE		Rated Pilot	
Rating Pilot		per P.O. 256 1941	
R.D.-65		Actg. Asst. <i>P. F. Hunt</i>	
		ADJUTANT: General.	
		SOUTHEAST AIR CORPS TRAINING CENTER	

Jack's 1941 Army Air Corps Reserve identification card.

		WAR DEPARTMENT THE ADJUTANT GENERAL'S OFFICE WASHINGTON, D.C.	
MONTMEAT JOHN K O 428436		IDENTIFICATION CARD	
21 APR 45		JOHN K MONTMEAT	
		NAME	
		CAPT AC	
		OF RANK	
		<i>John K. Montmeat</i>	
		<i>Pedric J. Wright</i>	
		MAJ AC	
		DATE	

Jack's 1945 War Department identification card.

France  
December 27, 1944  
                    

Dear Martha Ann -

I'm writing this to try  
to convince myself that you  
actually exist - that I really  
do have a brand new little  
daughter. And I want to  
practice writing your new  
name - Martha Ann.

Under any circumstances  
it would be a strange feeling  
to become a father, but this  
all happening by telegram is  
weird. Traditionally, you know,  
I should be right there facing  
the hospital corridor when you  
arrive.

But even from that thousand

Jack's letter to his daughter Martha, December 27, 1944 (page 1).

miles away and without ever  
having met you formally - I  
want you to know I love you  
and always will.

You've joined the most happily  
married parents you could possibly  
have selected and you'll probably  
find yourself swamped with  
all the love that overflows.

Please do something for me  
just as soon as you can get  
around, Martha Ann. That is  
have some pictures of you and your  
beautiful mother made and sent  
to me so that I can see my new  
family.

And tell that lovely mother of  
yours that I love her more than  
anything in all the world.

(Self consciously)  
Daddy

Jack's letter to his daughter Martha, December 27, 1944 (page 2).









A complete chronicle of one soldier's experience through World War II, John Kurt Montmeat: Letters 1941-1945 takes the reader from primary training, to the European theater of war.

John Kurt Montmeat (1916-2008), known as Jack, a flight instructor and pilot in the U.S. Army Air Corps with the storied 425th Night Fighter Squadron, flew the Northrop P-61 Black Widow, the first plane designed for night fighting.

A story of family, this narrative is told primarily through letters home to his parents in Paterson, New Jersey. In 1942, while stationed at Maxwell Field in Montgomery, Alabama, Jack met Ann Folmar. Their beautiful wedding is described in detail, as well as their early married life in San Antonio, Texas and Fresno, California as Jack awaited deployment overseas.

Read along as Jack received news of the birth of his daughter Martha in 1944, while based in France flying night reconnaissance missions.